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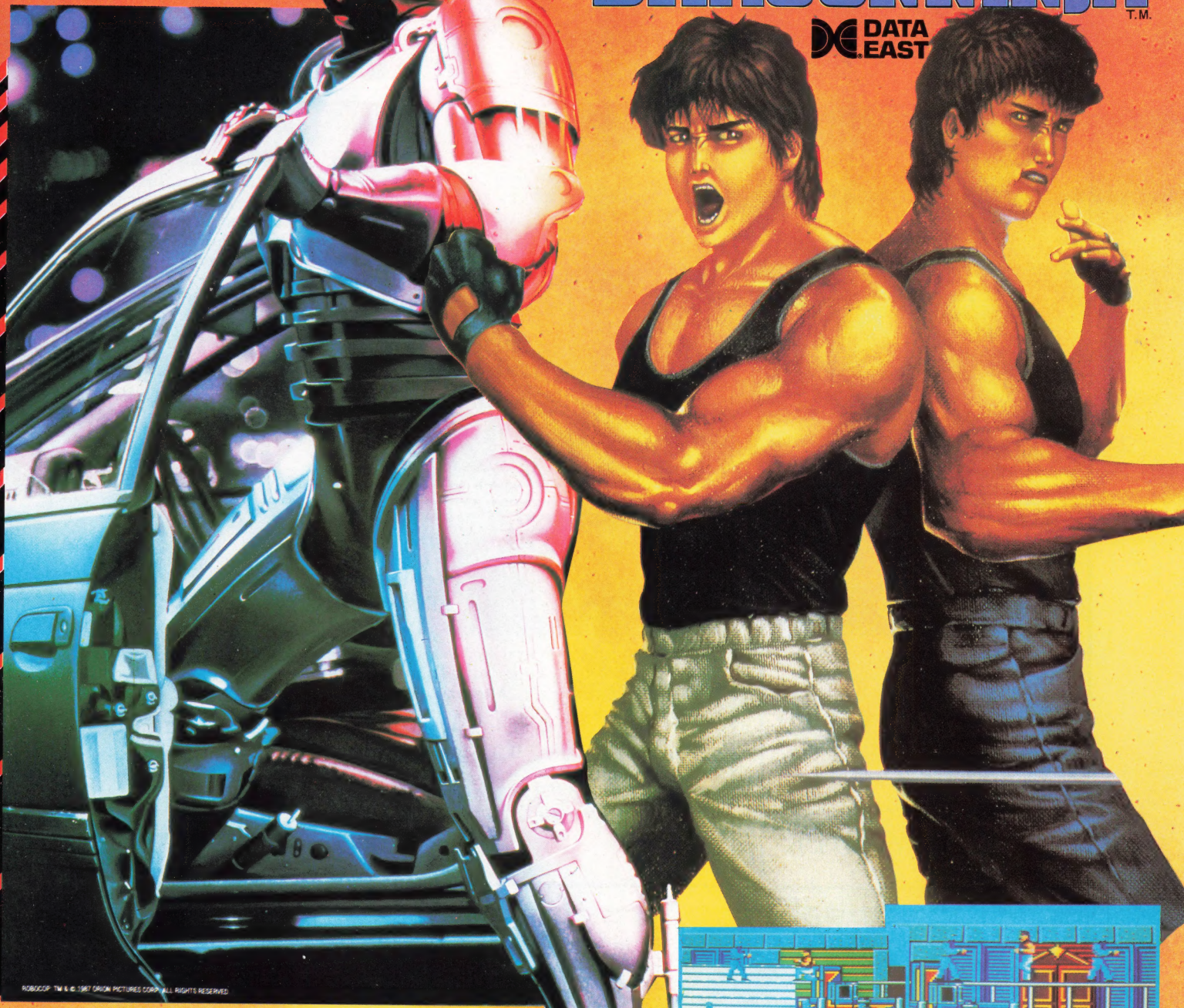
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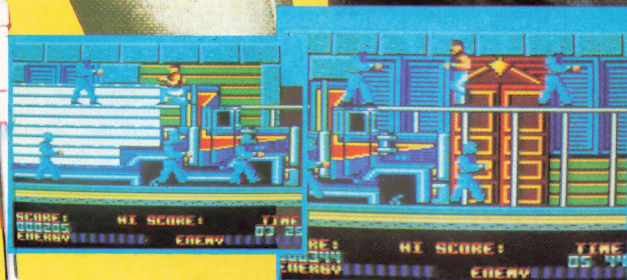
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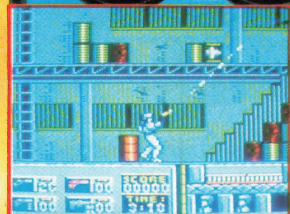
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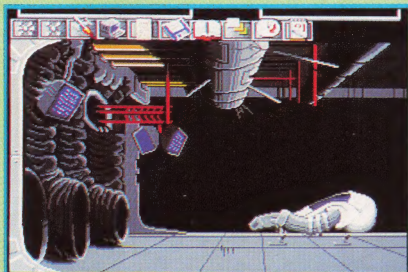
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ACTION PACKED

GRAPHIC ARTISTS - P. 18

Although programmers tend to be the ones most likely to be in the limelight as far as consumers are concerned, graphic artists play just as important a part in attracting the user to buy the game and to give it that 'something extra'. Martin Moth travels the UK to track down three such artists and investigate the men behind the images.



CHAOS STRIKES BACK - P.80

Well met, foolish one, you have arrived just in time. Don't just stand there, close the door and come closer to the fire. I trust you have had a good night's sleep, because I have news that will make you a stranger to your bed. 'Chaos has struck back!'

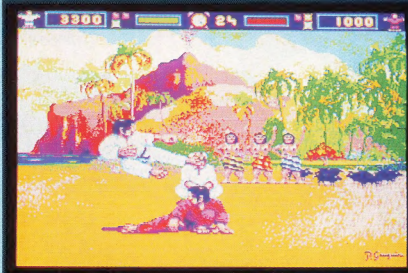
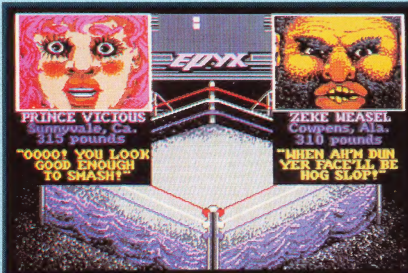
AT LAST THE SEQUEL TO:
DUNGEON MASTER

ACTION PACKED NEWS - P.4

Various Items from Astral Software, Imageworks, Infogrames, Novagen, Digital Magic Software, Alternative Software, Mandarin, Official Secrets, Cascade, Beau Jolly, Level 9, Virgin/Mastertronic, U.S. Gold, Microdeal, Codemasters, Hewson, Electronic Arts and UBI Soft feature in the new-style News-pages.

MEGATEST - BEAT'EM UP - P.84

Bruce Lee kicked his way out of the silver screen and onto eight-bit screens and launched what is arguably the most popular genre of computer entertainment. Jason Spiller traces the history of fighting games, analyses the appeal of 'beat'em-ups' and tests twelve examples available for the ST.

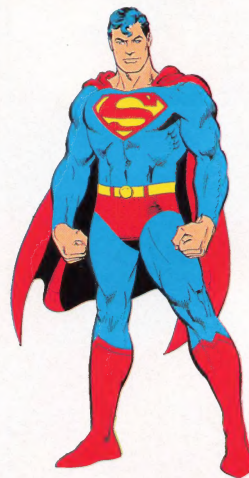


GIVING THE GAME AWAY - P.68

Steve Merrett brings you the definitive guide to R-Type. Other tips include, Afterburner, Fernandez must die, Daley Thompson and Times of Lore. Pokes this month are for Menace, Driller and Indiana Jones.

SUPERMAN COMPETITION P.68

Up, up and away in our superhero worthy £1000 competition sponsored by Tynesoft. Including 10 copies of Superman.



LETTERS P.14

Over the Christmas hols many of you must have switched off the TV blockbuster film repeats and put pen to paper because we ain't half got a lot of letters this month

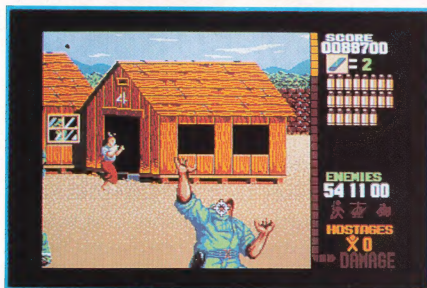
COMP RESULTS

Page 67 is your chance to find out the answers and the winners in the Spitting Image and Who Dares Wins competitions.

SUBSCRIPTIONS SPECIAL OFFERS P.68

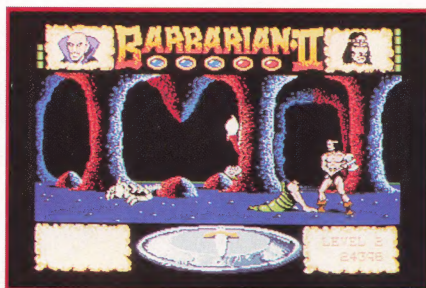
This month sees the introduction of some rather special subscription offers - turn to page 68 to find out whats up for grabs.

REVIEWS! REVIEWS! REVIEWS!

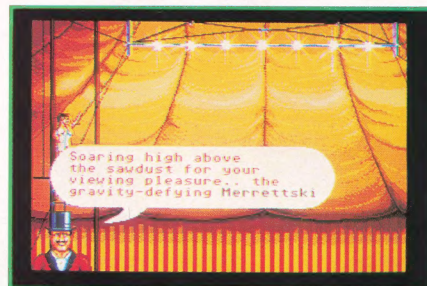


← **OP. WOLF** p.22

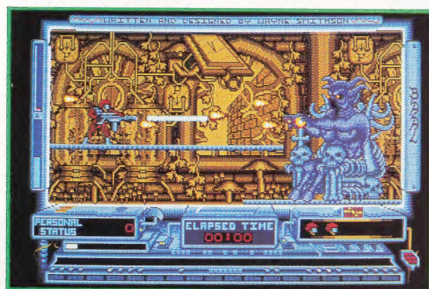
CIRCUS GAMES p.26 →



↑ **BARBARIAN II** p.30



FALCON p.38 ↓

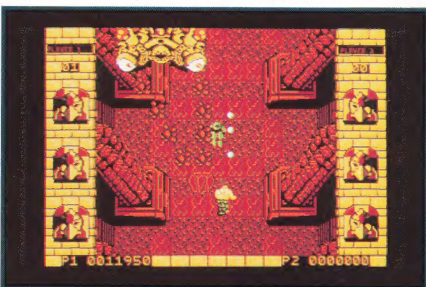


↑ **BAAL** p.54

RAMBO III p.50 ↓



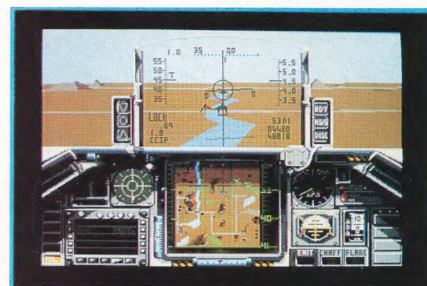
← **LED STORM** p.36



↑ **VICTORY ROAD** p.46



← **PURPLE SATURN** p.48

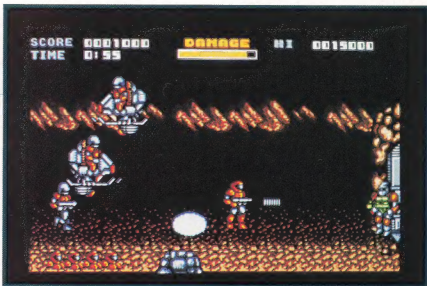


↑ **THUNDERBLADE** p.44



↑ **TRIVIAL PURSUIT 2** p.65

SOLDIER OF LIGHT p.58 ↓



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ACTION NEWS

Welcome to issue 10 of ST Action, I would like to thank all of you who took the time to send in Readers survey forms. Changes are now afoot (these re-designed easy-to-follow News pages being the first) so you can look forward to brighter interviews, bigger competitions and more interesting features. Finally, Martin "as an ex-flyer" Moth, our resident anything-that-flies simulator expert, has left us and flown to the dizzy heights of PR Manager at Microprose, a position we know he'll be happy in. All at Gollner Publishing and ST Action would like to wish him the best of luck in the future.

Flight Sim II in hardware re-jig

A member of the Goodwood Flying Club has made a lifesize mockup of a Cessna in his house with the help of an ST and SubLogic's Flight Sim II. Peter Lawler has stripped down his ST and connected all the keypad connections to various cockpit

switches so that the cockpit is as close to the real thing as possible. Rudder pedals, throttle, flaps and joystick all emulate the actual Cessna and the club members use it to practise cockpit familiarisation and in-flight routines.



Level 9 Scapeghost

Scapeghost is a new adventure being developed at the moment for a release sometime in March. In it, you play the part of a ghost. A gang of robbers try and pull off a heist and, in the confusion, you, an innocent bystander, get shot. You then become a ghost and have to clear your name, fix it so that the criminals are arrested and rescue a hostage.

Imageworks Blasteroids

Asteroids, the granddaddy of video games has been revamped and re-released under the banner, Blasteroids. Imageworks are putting the final touches to this best selling coin-op at the moment. Here's a screenshot to whet your appetite. The game will be available around March and will cost £19.99.



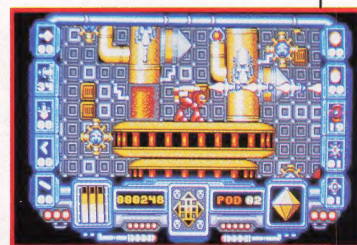
Cybernoid II & Custodian

Hewson are preparing Cybernoid II, Custodian (formerly Kalashnikov) and Stormlord for release on the ST. Expect Cybernoid II and Custodian to be out around January (and hopefully a review in this issue), with Stormlord following closely behind. Astaroth is in the development stages (see Pete Lyon in the Graphic



Cybernoid II, all the gameplay of the original but bigger and brighter.

Artist feature) and here is a sneak preview of some of the sprites that Pete is working on for the game. STOP PRESS: See the full review of Custodian in next month's issue.



Custodian: More multi-directional scrolling maze fun from Hewson.

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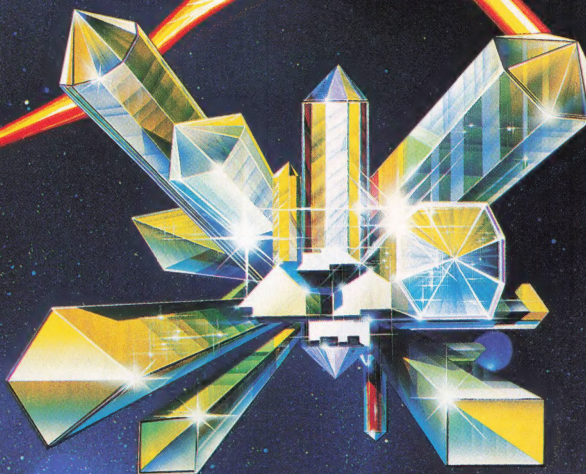


"The most impressive looking backgrounds, action areas and character sprites that have been created for home screens."

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ST User.



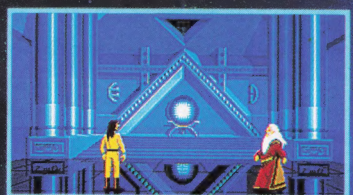
"The biggest game ever... exquisite backdrops."

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PREVIEW C & VG

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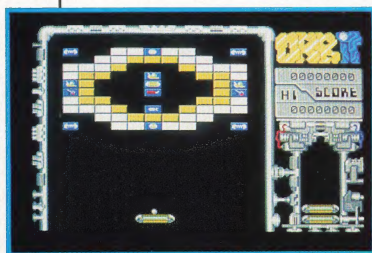


ILLUSTRATION: PETER ANDREW JONES.
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Mandarin add to STOS

Mandarin are cashing in on the success of STOS by releasing no less than FIVE STOS-related products within the next few months. STOS compiler will be out in February and allows you to compile your STOS programs. If you own a 1 meg ST, the program will allow you to compile the program in memory and then run the compiled game. A comprehensive manual is supplied with tips on how to speed up games and will retail at £19.95.

STOS Maestro is a sound-sampling package that will sell for £24.95. The disk is full of sampled sounds, as well as letting you capture sounds from other games. At £69.95,



STOS Maestro Plus is a sampling hardware package that enables you to sample sounds direct from CD, tape, mike inputs, etc..

STOS Fractal is a fractal generator for generating landscapes, etc. Also included is a map function that allows you to create a landscaped world for use in a STOS game. It is due out in the spring.

STOS Gamespack 1 is a compilation disk of 6 games for £19.95. There are full listings of the games for modification by the user whilst in STOS. Finally, STOS Sprites 600 is basically a disk full of 600 sprites for use in STOS games that will retail at £14.95.

Mandarin Software can be contacted at:
Europa House,
Adlington Park,
Adlington,
Macclesfield.
SK10 4NP

Star Blaze and Archipelagos

Star Blaze is being billed as 'a cross between R-Type, Salamander and Nemesis but played in 3-D'. In other words, it's nothing like those games (but it is, nonetheless, a 3-D shoot-'em-up). You play the part of a warrior trying to prove himself in battle. Your ship's view is similar to that of Outrun's and you must shoot the enemy ships and

avoid obstacles that hurtle towards you.

The game is said to feature 'photon sheet fire' and 'sphere explosion smart bombs' as well as 'Cosmic House Music'... Expect the game to be out in January at a price of £19.95.

Archipelagos is a new strategy game being programmed by Astral Software to retail at £19.95

sometime in the spring. You float above a group of islands, trying to destroy the Obelisk and restore the land to its rightful inhabitants. As well as trying to connect stones to the Obelisk, you must be wary of the Trees, Bloody Eggs and the Beachcomber who are all out to do their best to prevent you from gaining the upper hand.

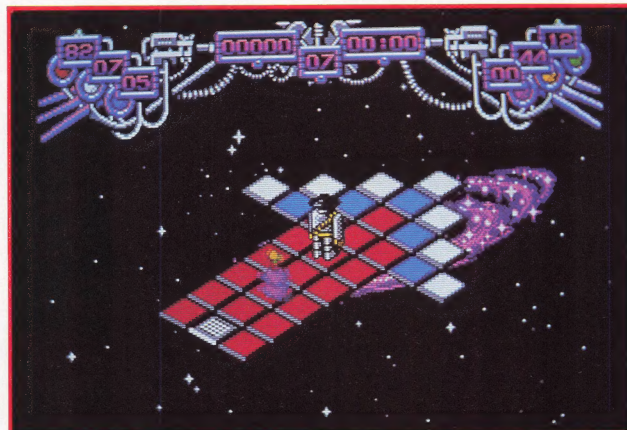


Alternative Software Mad Flunky, Wrangler and more

Alternative are finally making their move into the 16-bit market in the new year with three games: Wrangler, Mad Flunky and Mystery of the Indus Valley. Wrangler is set in an isometric playing area with 32 levels and 9 screens to each level. There are also bonus screens that appear at times and are similar to fruit machines. In the game, you control a

robot by the dubious name of Glint Westwood, whose job it is to mend panels and avoid alien droids.

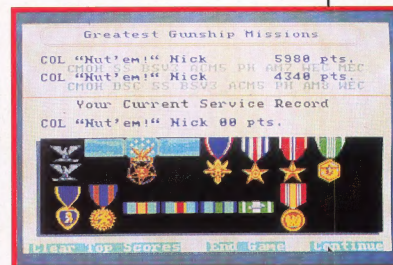
Mad Flunky is set in the Royal household and features Flunky, the butler, who must collect autographs. Unfortunately, we do not have any details of Mystery in the Indus Valley as of this moment, all three games will retail at £14.95 each.



Glint Westwood rides off into the starfield in search of more defective panels

Gunship shot down

Nick Clarkson, our very own Assistant Editor, has at last won fame (and nearly fortune) by being awarded the Congressional Medal of Honour in Gunship. He flew an 'Ultimate' mission and shot up loads of Commie tanks, as well as destroying both primary and secondary



Col. "Nut'em" Nick Clarkson's impressive array of medals.

targets. Slightly wounded, he flew back to base and was awarded the CMOH. He's now awaiting a certificate signed by Major 'Wild' Bill himself.

Nick's now concentrating on Times of Lore, Origin's latest Ultima-esque game. Initial reactions from his corner are very encouraging; see next month for a full report.

POWERDRONE...

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Available on C64 cassette (£9.99) and disk (£14.99), Spectrum (£12.99),

Amiga (£24.99)

ATTLE. ROLL IT..



Amiga screen shots shown



ST screen shots shown

SENSATION OF THE YEAR'

Amstrad cassette (£9.99) and disk (£14.99), Atari ST (£24.99),
and MSX (£9.99).

AFTERBURNER – You've played the arcade **smash** – now **experience** the white-knuckled **realism** of a supersonic **dogfight** at home! Using your heat-seeking **missiles** and laser anti-aircraft **fire**, can you be **top gun** against a seething supersonic swarm?

Experience brain-numbing **G-forces**; bones **rattling** with the body-jarring **pitch** and yaw ... **scan** with your **radar**, **lock on** your target and **FIRE!**



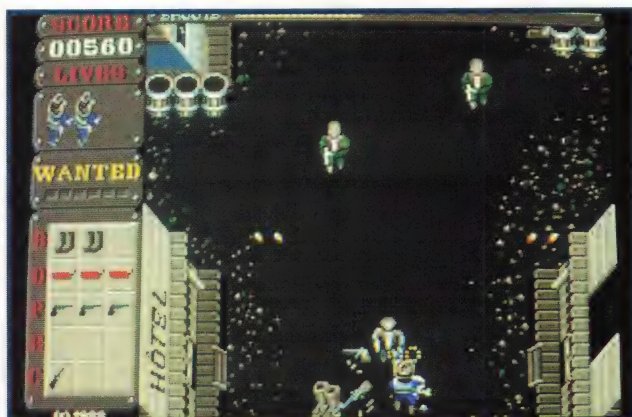
Infogrames Tintin Wanted

At last! An original variation on a popular theme. Infogrames are working on Wanted, a vertical-scroller that is based in a Western town, and you control a cowboy trying to rid the town of four gunslingers and their associates. All the ingredients of a vertical-scroller, but not an alien in sight. Available in December for £19.95.

As a follow-up to last month's news, here are some more screenshots of Tintin on the Moon. Initial sections within the game

include piloting Tintin's ship through a meteor storm, avoiding enemy attacks and landing the ship on the moon. Available late December at a price of £19.95.

A new game due out on the Exxos label sometime in the spring is Temple of the Flying Saucers. No details at present, but expect the game to feature the same quality graphics as Capt. Blood and Purple Rings of Saturn.



A vertical scrolling shoot'em-up without aliens and lasers? This game's a first.

Myth or official secrets?

Magnetic Scrolls are set to release a mini-adventure by the name of Myth. However, the game will not be on general release but will only be available to members of The Official Secrets Club. The game was specially commissioned by Official Secrets as an incentive to attract new members and is based around the antics of the Greek gods. For £19.95, you will get membership to the Official

Secrets club, a copy of Myth, six issues of 'Confidential' (a bi-monthly club mag), a copy of Gnome Ranger (or an alternative if you already have that game), a telephone helpline to provide hints and tips and the chance to win £500 of hardware. It also enables you to buy adventures at far cheaper prices. For more information, contact John Trevillian on (0279) 726541.



Games bundle 1040 STFM Super packs

Computer distributors, SDL have put together the 1040 STFM super pack. Featuring a 1040 with a built in modulator, the pack comes complete with over £450's worth of software. All for the amazing price of £499.99; now that's what I call value.

Silica can be contacted on 01-309 1111.

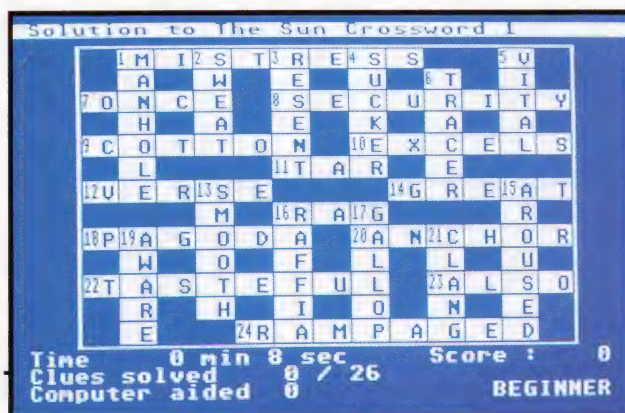
Microdeal Guardian

Microdeal are soon to release Guardian Moons, a multi-directional, parallax-scrolling, five-level shoot-'em-up for £19.95. The basic plot is that you set off in your spaceship to single-handedly destroy the dogooders from the planet Gargamadia. It will certainly make a change to play the bad guys.

Times and Sun Computer crosswords

Two packages dropped through the post the other day and, for a change, the programs had nothing to do with space aliens and big bad nasties. They are The Times' Computer Crosswords Vol 1 and The Sun's Computer Crosswords Vol 1. Both retail at £16.95 and £15.95, respectively, and

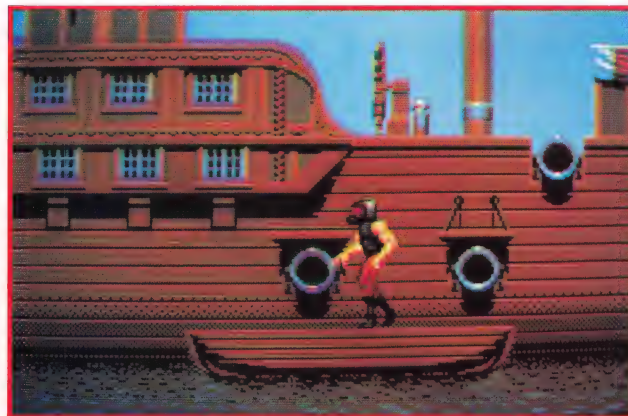
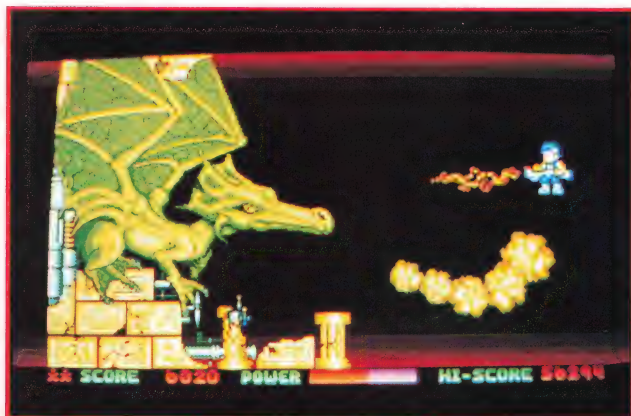
offer very good value for money as each disk offers 60 original crosswords to solve. Each disk has a clue-by-clue analysis of one puzzle to initiate beginners into the crossword's way of thinking. Initial reactions around the office are very favourable. See next month's issue for a full review.



--- STA 10 STA ---

Trained Assassin, an impressive looking multi-scrolling shoot'em-up

DMS' Scorpion looks like a great game, especially if the graphics are anything to go by.



Digital Magic Software

DMS is a new software label formed solely for 16-bit products. They have two games for release: Trained Assassin and Scorpion. Trained Assassin is a five-level, four-way scrolling

shoot-'em-up. Featuring good graphics, the game has the usual high number of weapons and extras to pick up throughout the game and will be available around February, priced

£24.95.

The other release is Scorpion, an arcade platform game with five levels that has different aliens for every level. With 16 objects to collect to enhance your

player's capabilities, it promises to be hectic action. Available sometime around February, Scorpion will also set you back £24.95.

Cascade 15

Cascade are set to release Disk 15 just before Christmas in an attempt to catch the late shoppers. What an original title for a compilation disk that features fifteen games! Price? A mere £19.95.

They also have three games in the pipeline. Thunderwing, due for release in January, is a flight combat simulator. DNA Warrior is a game with a similar storyline to the Fantastic Voyage film and should be out in February. Finally, they are working in conjunction with the RAF to bring out a flight simulation at the end of March. The proceeds from this will go to the RAF Benevolent Fund. More details including price just as soon as we have them...



U.S. Gold - The Last Crusade

The big news from the U.S. Gold camp is that they have signed up the rights to Lucasfilms, and will be bringing you Indiana Jones - The Last Crusade and Battlehawk sometime in the spring.

Another game currently being developed is Strider, from Capcom, being programmed by Tiertex. The game is a conversion of the arcade game Falcon but, understandably, they cannot use this already over-subscribed game title so have called it Strider. An original game being developed is Human Killing Machine. The game is similar to Streetfighter in the storyline (but hopefully a lot better!).

Darling Rugby simulator

Those Darlings from Codemasters are working on a rugby simulation game entitled, somewhat originally, Professional Rugby Simulator. The game will be out sometime in the new year retailing at around the twenty pound price mark.



Virgin/Mastertronic

Quite a few games are sprouting from the Portobello Road offices in the next few months. Budget games due out are Hacker, Bombfusion and Rigel's Revenge. All priced £9.99. Monopoly Deluxe is due out in January followed by Dreadnought and Aargh! in February for £19.99 each. Star Gate is due for release in February.



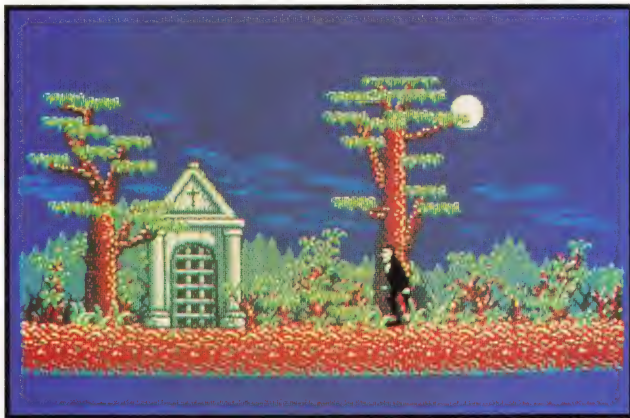
Damocles release date finally announced

Mega exclusive! Novagen have actually set a release date for Damocles. Bruce Jordan is reckoning on a March release for Paul Woakes's epic (as has been the wait!) 3D space game.

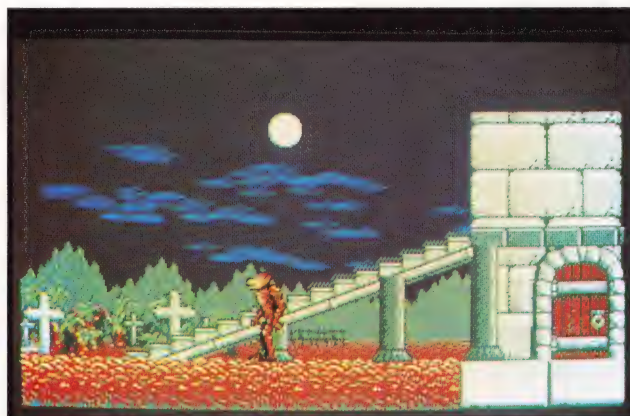
Night Hunter from UBI

Night Hunter will be the next game from Ubi Soft. Originally based around the Dracula plot, the game is an arcade adventure where you play the part of a vam-

pire who can change between man, werewolf and bat in pursuit of life-sustaining blood. Expect this rather macabre title in January.



Bram Stoker's novel, "Dracula", has been behind the inspiration for many games, Night Hunter is no exception.



Top Ten Scoring Games This Month

1	Operation Wolf	90%
2	Barbarian II	85%
3	Falcon	82%
4	Thunderblade	78%
5=	Baal	69%
5=	Final Assault	69%
7	President is Missing	68%
8	Purple Saturn Day	66%
9	Circus Games	64%
10	Trivial Pursuits II	61%

Beau Jolly to release Hits 2

Amidst the ever growing myriad of software compilations Beau Jolly are set to release Computer Hits Vol 2 this month. The games featured on this compilation will be; Tetris, a Russian puzzle game; Tracker, Rainbird's 3D strategy/simulation games; Joe Blade, a military arcade/adventure romp; and Tau Ceti, CRL's epic 3D space adventure.

Sierra's 1989 quest for excellence.

Sierra On-Line have no less than six releases scheduled for the early part of '89. Manhunter :New York is at this very moment being reviewed at the STA office, watch next month for a full review. Police Quest II: The Vengeance, sees the Death Angel back on the streets. Follow your fortunes during

Electronic Arts Ferrari Formula One

Electronic Arts are working on Ferrari Formula One on the ST. Having sold well on the Amiga, the game is now being converted to the ST (the usual way round for EA these days). The game not only requires driving skills but players will also be called upon to manage the Ferrari team. All sixteen tracks from the 1986 season will be raced upon and drivers will find themselves competing against the likes of Alain Prost, Ayrton Senna and Nigel Mansell, each of whom have their own particular driving skills. In all Ferrari Formula One will offer a mixture of intense strategy and arcade quality gameplay. Expect the game around February.

Another EA game in progress is Populace. No screenshots as yet, I'm afraid. Fusion, as featured in previous news pages, is looking good and will be out

sometime around February. All of EA's games will carry a price tag of £24.99 and further information can be obtained from EA themselves on: 0753 46465



Ferrari Formula One, a race game featuring intense strategy and arcade quality action.



the Californian 'Gold Rush', a game containing three quests in one. Leisure Suit Larry is back, 'Looking for love (in several wrong places'. Roger Wilco, meanwhile, has crossed paths with the Pirates of Pestulon in the third Space Quest adventure. Finally, King's Quest IV sees the perils of princess Rosella. All of these games feature Sierra's new graphic routines and look set to become classics.

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Questions from Israel

Maybe in Britain the Amiga is catching up with the ST, but down here in Israel - no way! Why not make ST Action an ST/ Amiga mag and call it 16-bit Action? Anyway, whilst I'm putting pen to paper, here are some questions.

1. Are EA going to make an ST Interceptor?
2. What about a version of their superb Archon or Seven Cities of Gold?
3. Why are you reviewing only 20 games (+/-) a month when about 30 games are released?
4. How can your latest Megatest include Impossible Mission II and Bubble Bobble in the same test? Impossible Mission II is a platform adventure like Dark Castle, Black Lamp, or Barbarian from Psygnosis, while Bubble Bobble's a pure arcade platform like Chubby Gristle, Mouse Trap or Bubble Ghost!

Let's see you tackle these questions... P.S. Why does every second letter include a P.S.?

Anonymous Israel

At the moment, EA have no plans to develop an ST Interceptor, nor have they any plans to work on the other two games before March '89, which is as far as they could check for me. As for us reviewing a small number of games, I am sure you will agree that we review the greatest number of ST games each month, in order to warn you of poor quality software as well as recommend the good. Bubble Bobble and Impossible Mission II, no matter what the official title given to each game, are both platform games and, as such, are featured together in the platforms megatest.

STOS plea

I am wondering if you can help me? I have bought STOS for my ST and I understand most of its Basic. What I want to know is how do I scroll several screens as I can only scroll one screen? I have written to Mandarin about this but they have not replied, so I am hoping that you could help me?

K M Chau
Kilmarnock

I checked with our STOS reviewer, Mark Annetts, for this. There is no straightforward way of scrolling multiple screens. However, a number of methods will do the task. One way is to load three or four screens into databanks and then 'screen-copy' relevant sections into a background screen and then 'screen-swap' it into view. Pages 146-150 of the STOS manual will help. Other methods are dynamically making screens from sprites or turning the screens into strings and then manipulating them with string commands. However, I suggest you join the registered owners

**The Letters Desk,
ST Action,
10 Theatre Lane,
Chichester,
West Sussex,
PO19 1SR**

club and get their expert advice. Contact Pat Winstanley on 0942 227013.

Playing double

I am writing to ask you if there are any two-player games for the ST. By that I mean the ones that two people can play on the same side. I think these games are ace and there should be a lot more games like Match Day II, Double Dragon and Target Renegade.

Paul Doyle
Bradford

The games that immediately spring to mind are Gauntlet II (a four-player game), International Soccer, Bubble Bobble, Skulldiggery, Barbarian (Palace), A Question of Sport, Ikari Warriors, Leatherneck (another four-player game), Skychase, Wizball, Hotshot, Speedball, IK+, SDI (a tenuous link) and Roadwars.

Prices across the pond

Recently, I was on holiday in Canada and bought an issue of STart, an American publication. I was astonished to find out that software costs in Dollars exactly the same as we pay in Pounds (i.e. roughly half the UK price). Question. Why do we pay so much?

Does anybody know of a source of soft carry-ing cases for the ST as opposed to the hard case (not available in the US/Canada)?

G P Craig
Belfast

Readers chart

I am writing to say congratulations on a MEGA magazine, and I support your idea to keep out a high score table, as people will send in ridiculous numbers just to get into the table. However, a games top ten chart, compiled from the readers, is a good idea, as it lets us know what other readers like and what to avoid. The only way around this is to send in what we think are the top five best games, and the one with the most votes is voted Readers Game of the Month.

Glenn Turner
Crediton

Thanks for the idea, Glenn. One point that I could add

is that readers could also include their worst three games, and we could therefore print what you think the real dodo's are.

Mr Angry is alive and well and living in Edinburgh

I have various points to discuss, one of which I'm furious about. They are:

1. Buying the STFM superpack and then discovering that there's no ST BASIC given with the machine. WHY? It's stupid not to include it.
2. Mediagenic releasing Afterburner early so no magazines could review it. The game's disgraceful. Luckily, I know my retailer and he warned me about it. I didn't buy it.
3. Why did Grandslam release Pacmania with only half the screen showing? The rest of the screen is credits. I'm sure they could have had a full scrolling screen as with the Amiga version.
4. For the love of God, let's have a Top 10. In order to stop rubbish games reaching the top, make it a readers' Top 10. You can do this by getting readers to send in their own Top 10.

Keep the magazine looking good. I love the cover.

Kenneth Jackson
Edinburgh

A game of your choice is on its way to you, Mr Jackson.

English, and proud of it!

I'd just like to reply to Gary Campbell's letter in the December issue. You know, it's the one where he slags off the English. Well, Matey, at least WE (that is, the English) made it into the European finals, and judging by the performance of the Scottish teams in Europe, they might as well not bother.

Oh, and by the way, I think ST Action is a great magazine. Especially the Letters Desk!

P.S. Can I have a free game! Please, pretty please? Thank you.

Andrew Wimbs
Heathfield

Thanks for your letter, Andrew, but I don't think you'll be getting the game this month. Better luck next time...

Question time

First of all, I'd like to say that ST Action is really good value for money. I have only bought one or two ST magazines and except for yours, I've been slightly

disappointed. I will not mention names, but I paid £1.45 for a mag half the size of yours and that was full of ads (well, we all make mistakes). When I saw your magazine I could hardly believe my eyes. STA is packed full of reviews and they are really detailed. Predicting interest and addictiveness is a great idea.

Please could you answer some questions of mine?

1. Is it possible to show more screenshots and make the reviews longer?
2. Can you return a game to a mail order house if you are disappointed or if the game is faulty?

James Gallagher
Cookham

We are constantly trying to increase the review length of the better games and include more screenshots, but at certain times, such as Christmas and around the PC Show, the amount of games is too much to have many long reviews. As for returning a game to a mail order concern, I'm afraid you can only return it if it is faulty. If you are disappointed with the game, that is not the dealers fault and you are not in a position to return the game. This only shows how important it is to read the reviews properly before deciding what to buy.

Learning to drive

I am thinking of buying a replacement internal drive. I have a 520 STFM with only a single-sided disk drive. If I buy one, will it affect the compatibility of my software? If it does, is it possible to boot from drive B?

Stuart Moffatt
Northwich

There will not be any problems involved with fitting a new double sided drive, other than if you fit a drive that is not an official Atari model, then you might have to alter the plastic casing of your ST to accommodate the new drive. As for software compatibility, you will not suffer any problems as far as any of us in the office are aware. Finally, you can boot up a machine from drive B.

Spotting boo-boos

Firstly, let me congratulate you on a first-class magazine. With excellent game reviews and screenshots,

you're one of the best around.

Secondly, what happened in issue 8 of ST Action that I have just bought? On page 34, you reviewed the Epyx compilation with World Games on it when it doesn't contain World Games but Winter Games! (Odd?) Also, on page 42 you reviewed the excellent Starray but you printed a picture of Luxor (!) and the other picture that actually shows Starray is an Amiga screenshot!

Kevin Sydenham
Sheffield

Epyx started by releasing the compilation with World Games on it. However, they then found that World Games would not work with certain systems and so replaced World Games with Winter Games. Therefore, if you want to be sure that the compilation will work on your system, buy the later version that features Winter Games.

As far as the Starray photos are concerned, the Luxor one was a cock-up at the repro-house and was not noticed in time to correct it. The other, supposedly an Amiga shot is, in fact, an ST shot. Steve says he should know as he took the photo!

Record breaker?

I wonder if it is any kind of record that I have just bought a 520ST mainly for game play at the age of 63? While I'm writing, can anyone tell me where I might get a lead made up to use my Hitachi television through its RGB DIN socket (7 pin) connected to the monitor socket on my Atari. I tried locally and was advised that in spite of my supplying full technical details they couldn't do it.

R Moyes
Gislingham

Well, are there older readers out there. Please write in as I'd be interested to hear from you. Also, write in if you can help Mr Moyes with his lead problem.

Status symbology

Have you noticed that a lot of people seem to be obsessed with the type of computer they own and how they think it is better than everybody else's? Less people are enthralled by how wonderful any computer is at enabling us to be entertained which, after all, is what it's all about.

A friend of mine said to me, 'I'm getting an ST because I just want to show off to John, as he thinks his Amstrad is better than my Spectrum'. The reasoning behind the possession of an ST or Amiga that endows the owner with some prestige or superiority over lesser mortals is brilliantly sick. This, I'm sure, will anger some ST owners. I own an ST, Amiga and

Atari 130XE and I don't for one moment believe that owning any of these machines has guaranteed me a place in heaven. I don't really mind if there are better computers around or even if other people own them. I think I got a good deal and I'm quite happy with all my machines.

P.S. Why don't mail order companies supply order forms with their adverts? It would make our lives so much easier?

Gordon Sands
Wolverhampton

Mail order companies normally try and fit as much into an advert as possible and would consider an order form an unnecessary waste of costly advertising space.

Held hostage

After reading the December issue of ST Action I ordered Hostages (Infogrames). I was disappointed to find that it did not live up to it's review.

I found the controls unresponsive. Why do you have to hit the ESC and function keys at least twice before they are recognised? The machine gun in the hands of the Embassy SAS man is unpredictable and similar to Stan Laurel in Pardon Us. The game has a nasty habit of finishing without warning. Why does it not tell you that time is up, or that you have just surreptitiously killed a hostage?

When the marksman shoots a shadowed figure in the window, the figure happily carries on walking for a few seconds, quite oblivious to a nasty head wound. Finally, why is half the spelling on screen in french ('Capitaine', 'Commandant') and the other half mis-spelt ('beeing')? And what is 'sauvetage' meant to be?

In my opinion, Hostages just about makes 70% and the review should have mentioned the points above.

Paul Davies
Cheltenham

Thank you for your comments, Mr Davies. The above points have been noted but it is the opinion of the guys in the office that Hostages was an enjoyable game and that the review was fair.

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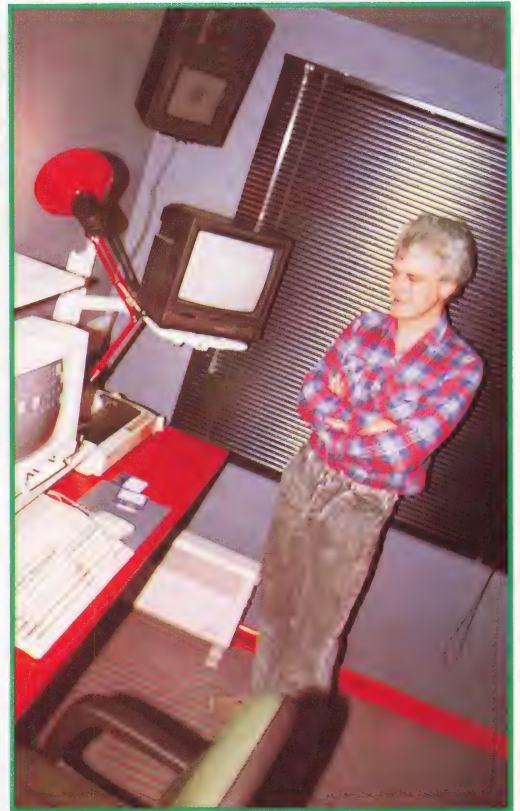
ARTISTS

Although programmers tend to be the ones most often in the limelight as far as consumers are concerned, graphic artists play just as important a part in attracting you to buy a game- and to give it that 'something extra'. Martin Moth travels the UK to track down three such artists and investigate the men behind the images.

Pete Lyon

'Before getting into computer art, I was a professional artist. I was an art teacher and I painted front covers for paperbacks, magazines, etc.. However, at the same time as I was doing all that, I bought a Spectrum simply as a toy. Being in the educational system and having teaching qualifications, I found that there was the opportunity to teach Basic in Adult Education Centres as a part-time teacher. So I started off in com-

-The faces behind the pictures

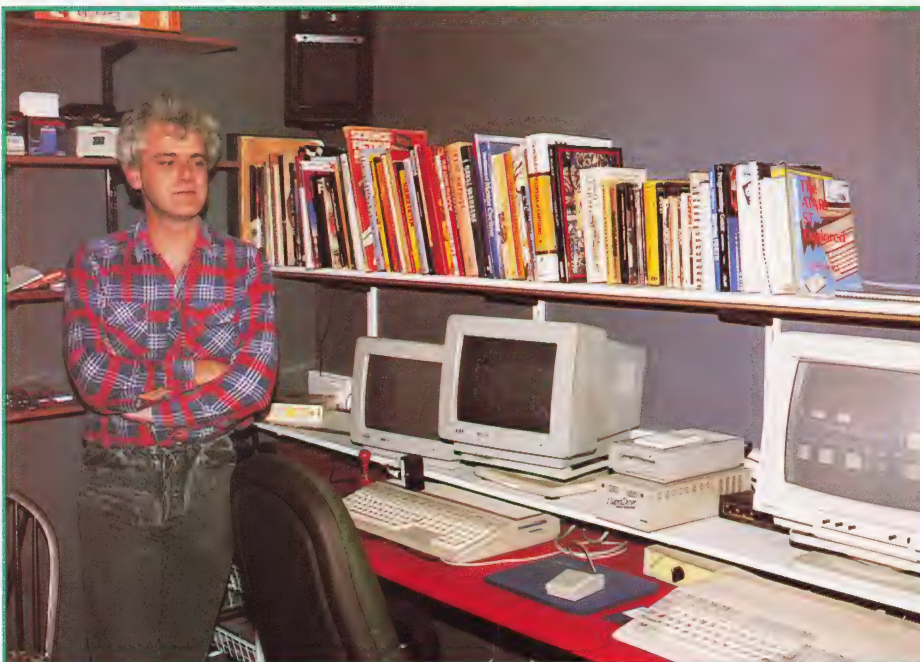


puters by supplementing my salary teaching Basic. As a consequence of that, and as a result of getting a considerable sum of money for doing a series of paintings for a publisher, I invested in an ST within a year of it being launched.

'Having got the ST, I knocked up a picture in an afternoon and thought "Hey, this is easy". So I thought I'd write off to a software company and see what happened. By chance, the first company that I contacted was Microdeal. They sent me to see Steve Bak. Now Steve is very much a no-nonsense type of guy and he simply turned around to me and said "Go on, let's see you do something then". I was so nervous that the resulting picture was awful. I'd got very drunk the night before and my hand was actually shaking as I fought to control the mouse!

'He got me to do the title screen that afternoon for a pool game that he was writing. Steve had a really awful old television as a colour monitor that had sinusoidal waves wobbling down the screen as I was trying to paint. I actually had to draw my own hand on screen and, what with the shakes and the fact that the screen never stayed still for more than a few moments at a time, I was fighting a losing battle. When I saw the picture later on a proper monitor it was awful, but Steve seemed fairly pleased with it.

'The next project was to knock up some backgrounds for Karate Kid II. I went and saw the film (awful, I was picking holes in it all the way through) and then managed to produce some screens. I was amazed



PETE LYON



when, at the first Atari village at the PC Show, I was congratulated by one of the Tramiels. I had never heard of this guy but sensed that I was supposed to be impressed, so when he congratulated me on the Karate Kid graphics, I nodded and mumbled a thank you doing my best impression of a humble artist.

'I then suddenly discovered that the fun thing to do was animation. I originally thought that all I would be involved in was background pictures for adventure games. I never thought that I'd get involved in animation and arcade-style games. I'd done animation at art college in the old style, where it took something like six months to complete ten seconds worth of animation. My first introduction to computer animation was to do all the karate moves for Karate Kid. I loved it. I mean I had never seen my pictures move before, unless I'd

thrown them across the room. After that, one thing led to another and work really started taking off. More people asked me to do graphics for their games and here I am now, although as far as companies are concerned, I do tend to stick mainly to Microdeal.

'One of the things that amuses me is when all of the people involved in a project get together for a confab; I find that after some time of pure "program-speak" I'm completely lost, so I go out for a walk. I feel totally left out of the meeting as there's not a lot to discuss about the graphics, so I go out and they all say, "Oh, he's an artist, artists always do things like that!"

'As far as computer graphics are concerned, I find that the essential thing to remember is that one uses the computer purely as a pixel painter, not to attempt to emulate,

say, oil or gauche painting. In art, and by that I mean "Art" with a capital "A", the techniques used to create the painting and the materials used are an integral part of the finished picture, whereas in computer art, the process leading up to the completion of the finished screen is unimportant; what counts is the final image. Also, because

of the limited palette, one has almost to create illusions to get certain effects.'

Jai Redman

One of the main problems that plagues Software Studios, the development side of Activision and Electric Dreams, is that they are constantly on the lookout for some of Jai's practical jokes. After Jai visits the offices for progress meetings, the rest of the Software Studios gang have to hunt round and find the dozens of little "cartoons" and sketches featuring some of the big names of the industry that he's put up around the place. "I tend to leave things lying around..."



Jai Redman with Zippy the pin head (below).

Trying to get anything serious out of Jai for more than five minutes at a time is a major achievement.

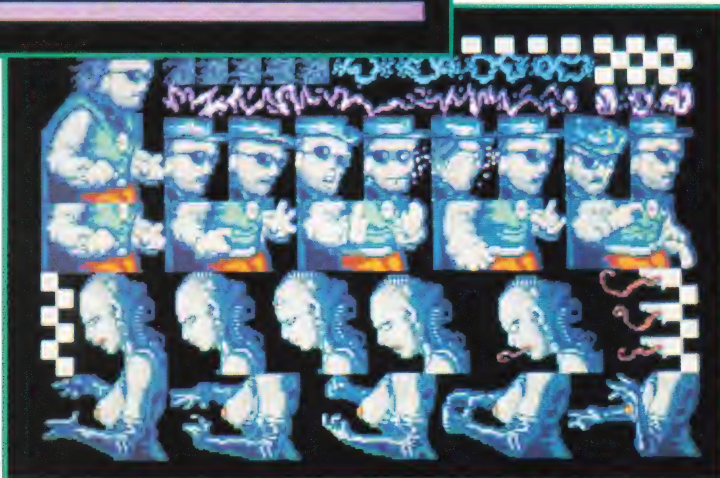
'I don't play computer games. The last game I had was SDI and that was only because someone gave me a copy.'

Currently, Jai is completing an 'A' level in art and then hopes to go on to study Fine Art. Jai is another instance of finding himself working in computer graphics by accident.

'I was messing around with a friend trying to make computer games, a task not made easy by the fact that he was trying to write games in Basic. My side of things was alright,



Some of Pete's sprite work screens.





but everything fell through until we came to do some work experience and we decided to try and find something connected with computers. Electric Dreams were just forming around that time and it was pure fluke that one of us managed to get in. My friend started there and somehow introduced me to Electric Dreams and I showed Dave Cummins some of my work and it all started from there. Eventually something came my way and I took it.

'I started off using Degas and am still using it. Someone tried to get me to use Art Studio, but I found I couldn't use it. It's full of these icons that I don't comprehend. After all, I'm only

an artist. People are also trying to get me to use the Amiga. I've told them, no way. The ST takes me long enough to get 16 colours on screen; if I had an Amiga and had 32 colours to use, it would take me forever!

'I really like working on the Spectrum. It has a grainy texture to its graphics that I like and have to work very hard to achieve on the ST; I have to take bits away to get the effect that is ready-made on the Speccy. Having said that, that's just my personal style. You can see it in most of my "normal" artwork. The course that I'm on at the moment tries to break down all preconceptions of how a picture is created, and so this is at odds with

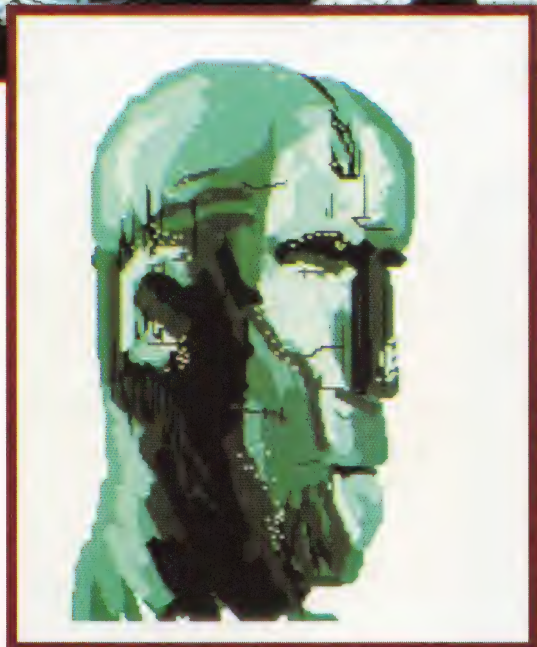
of the game is brilliant. After the graphics are finished it's just a matter of getting the public to take a good look at the game and not just pass it by, saying "I'm not into strategy games".

'I like doing computer graphics: it's easy, fun to do, and it broadens my artistic experiences. But whether I'll be still doing it in a few years time is another matter altogether.'

Alan Honeyset

'I really came into this line of work by default. A friend of a friend who was living in London, doing some work for Magnetic Scrolls, phoned me up and said that there was some work there if I wanted it. I went up and showed some work that I had done on the C64 and they took me on. I started by converting the graphics on The Pawn onto the C64. From conversions, I moved on to original pictures on the Atari for adventures, such as Corruption, and now they have taken the Commodore away and I work solely on the ST.

'I started on the ST with Neochrome and, to be honest, it's a case of "Better the devil you know..." I've seen other packages that have various other functions but, really, I prefer to toil away with what I've got. I must emphasise the word "toil"; computer graphics is a toil. There's no doubt about it. There is nothing less



my computer artwork which has to look realistic, or at least marginally so.

'The project I'm working on at the moment is 2200AD. I turned down the Afterburner graphics! They pleaded with me to do them and I said no. Ha! The graphics on 2200AD were originally ported PC graphics - yeurgghh! I set about completely redoing the graphics and so far they're looking quite good. I've luckily been allowed free rein to create all the graphics as I see fit. Hopefully, I should be able to get some animation into the game which would really liven things up a bit. The rest



ALAN HONEYSET

sympathetic than the mouse as far as conversion of the artist's inspiration onto a finished surface goes. It's simply a pain.

'I went to college and did graphics for three years and then worked in industry for a few years in graphics before getting into computer graphics. All the time, however, I was dreaming



The interrogation scene in *Corruption* showing the detail of the faces (inset).



of being a rock musician.

'Computer artists are severely limited in their creations, not just because of only having sixteen colours to work with, but because of the limited resolution and lack of transitional tones. As regards the limited resolution of the screen, detail is a matter of implication. In other words, by manipulation of pixels and colours, you imply a certain detail rather than



paint it as you would see it (which is impossible anyway). The lack of transitional tones leads to a great lack of subtlety in one's artwork. There's no way of working around it, you just have to make each area tonally distinct from one another. Cotman was an English landscape painter in watercolours who used this idea and, if you look at his paintings, you'll find that each area of the painting was distinct, tonally, from the other, and it works well as a design. I find that if I can work to this principle, then I can get quite a nice picture without having to bother too much about transitional tone.

'If I had a computer for personal use rather than business, I can't really say that I would spend hours and hours trying to create images because, obviously, a brush and

watercolours are far more sympathetic to your requirements as a painter. It's quicker and the results are far more pleasing on the eye. In effect, what you are doing with computer graphics is a very miniscule form of mosaic, placing different coloured tiles next to one another to create the overall picture.

'One of my major concerns is with composition - in other words, how the picture is put together. This is one area that the computer is good for because, with the difficulties encountered with colours and tones, one has to make the picture composition good in order to lift the image above the run-of-the-mill graphic screens. It's the difference between, say, painting a good picture and painting a brilliant picture. The strength in most pictures is from a unity between relative elements of the picture. Most elements are connected in some way to strengthen lines that the eye follows. If elements are unconnected, the eye tends to wander around the painting and not latch on to anything specific. If, however, the composition is good, it can reinforce a particular theme or detail within the painting that the artist wants emphasised.'

STA

ARTISTS

GRAPHIC

Currently, Operation Wolf is one of my favourite coin-op games and so I was relying on Ocean to save me a packet of money in the arcades. The question is: Does 'Wolf' live up to my hopes and expectations? Happily, I can report that the game loses little in the translation and the swift and responsive mouse controls are a good substitute for the machine-gun on the arcade game. Ocean have made no short cuts here!

JS

OPERATION WOLF

"At-teeen-shun! Now listen ere you 'orrible little maggot. A nasty hinternational hincident 'as occurred, and it seems, 'eaven 'elp us, that you are the only one capable of succeeding. So, shoulder your Uzi sub-machine gun and get out there and free those 'ostages!"

— — — — — OCEAN (£19.95) — — — — —

the arcade machine was first released, it was an instant success, with the front-mounted Uzi sparking initial interest and the game's high playability factor holding the newly-gained attention.

The action begins with an opening scene of your character parachuting, unannounced, behind enemy lines. Having landed, another screen opens showing your prospective route. Your mission isn't going to be an easy one, involving fighting your way through six stages, picking up extra ammo, gaining vital information and, finally, releasing the imprisoned hostages.

After another of the many disk swaps, the first scene will load and a screen will briefly appear telling you how many men must be shot before you can progress.

Obviously, Ocean weren't going to supply a sub-machine gun with every copy, but they did use the next best thing: a floating cross-hair gun-sight, which is controlled by the mouse. You are initially armed with six magazines of bullets and six grenades - both of which are used by clicking on the two mouse buttons - and it is by firing these carefully, not to mention sparingly, that you must make your way to



With all the major companies launching their mega-licences, Ocean follow suit and unveil their conversion of Taito's machine gun-toting coin-op, Operation Wolf. When



"Rat-a-lat-a-tat, Kaboom!" - Take cover, Ocean's Operation Wolf has finally arrived. What a good job the French programmers have made of it, too. Operation Wolf is nearly an arcade perfect copy of the original machine, albeit without the Uzi. The graphics are very colourful, exceptionally well drawn and the attention to detail is brilliant. It is the sound, however, that impressed me - especially the digitized speech. For me, Operation Wolf is a sure-"fire" winner!

NC

your only escape route - the airport. When the action begins, the soldiers appear from both sides of the screen, shooting as they come. As the bullets whistle past your ears, you must position your cursor on them and click the left mouse button to release a volley of bullets. They then fall with a chilling yell, only to be replaced by another of their buddies. To the right of the main action is a health barometer which rises with each hit you take. Should this reach the top, the action will fade away and some clear digitised speech will inform you of your fatal injury. Care must



STA
Rating
90%

GRAPHICS: 91%
SOUND: 78%

LASTING APPEAL: 90%
ADDICTIVENESS: 91%

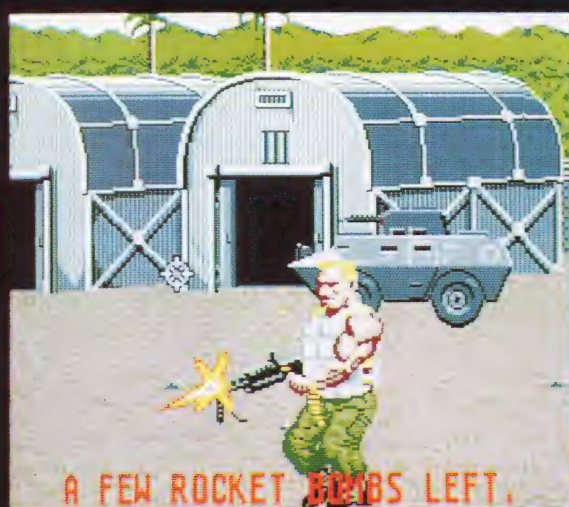
DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: 122233



SCORE
0057300
= 0
ENEMIES
29 06 05
HOSTAGES
X 0
DAMAGE



SCORE
0059750
= 0
ENEMIES
06 05 04
HOSTAGES
X 0
DAMAGE



SCORE
0060150
= 0
ENEMIES
01 05 04
HOSTAGES
X 0
DAMAGE

Not content with pumping bullets into you, the enemy send out deadlier enforcements whose Grenades, Bazookas and knives deplete your energy considerably. Additionally, from level 3 onwards, bullet-proof jacket clad guys appear, who can only be destroyed with a bullet to the head!

be taken when you blast all the occupants of a screen, as, occasionally, an innocent civilian or, on later levels, a hostage will appear and, if shot, you will forfeit some energy from your dangerously heightening bar.

The soldiers that appear are all varied in their garb and the weapons they hold: Commandos in the background throw their knives at you; others fire bazookas and lob grenades but, thankfully, these can be

deflected with a well-timed bullet or grenade. Other soldiers take different forms: machine gun-wielding giants who are wearing bullet-proof jackets and the only way to kill them is a bullet in the head; snipers crawling towards you; and, at the end of the second level (the jungle) a general known only as 'The Boss', holding a gun to the head of the female villager he is using as a shield. Several dozen shots must be pumped into this slimy toad



Operation Wolf has been my favourite coin-op since the PC Show, so I was really pleased to see this conversion being practically spot-on. The lack of a front-mounted Uzzi is slightly noticeable, but the mouse control is very responsive and more than adequate. The enemy characters are large and well animated, and all of the original's graphical touches - such as the windows shattering when you release a grenade - are retained. Sonically, Operation Wolf is of a similar high calibre - consisting mainly of between-level jingles and some excellent speech synthesis. I cannot fault this conversion - it is brilliant. I would even go as far as to say that it just pips its arcade parent in the playability stakes, as it is slightly easier! With the ST housing some near-perfect arcade conversions, we have never had it so good. And, judging by Operation Wolf, it can only get better!

SM

before he finally lets her go and dies. Likewise, the vehicles that trundle or fly across the screen are grenade fodder, but if you don't destroy them within a few seconds of their appearance, they will round on you, depleting your energy with a spray of bullets. Additionally, if you have run out of grenades, a continuous stream of bullets will eventually turn the offending vehicle into shrapnel fragments, killing anybody too close to it.

Now, shooting and blowing up all these soldiers and their vehicles is obviously going to empty your magazines and your grenade pouches. However, when your level reaches just above critical, fresh magazines and extra grenades appear on the ground and, if shot, fly off-screen, only to appear in your status panel to the right of the action. Alternatively, albeit a dubious method, extra ammo can be accumulated by shooting any animals that appear. These poor, unfortunate beasts come in the form of chickens, vultures and pigs, and will relinquish extra items when shot a few times. Other helpful items worth shooting are the red bottles marked with a 'P', as these reduce your damage level by a few squares.

Every now and then, your destructive progress is noticed by the enemy and they despatch several helicopters to deal with you. The action now switches to a remote jungle with waves of three 'choppers' appearing from the horizon. Also dropping down the screen are extra grenades, and these must be used against the thundering onslaught. As they appear, guns blazing, you must launch a grenade at the centre helicopter and, when it explodes, the other two will be caught in the explosion and will blow up in a visually impressive chain reaction!

The level ends when you have killed, maimed and generally wrecked your given quota. A picture will now show you enjoying your victory by blowing up a building, having your injuries healed or replenishing your ammunition supply, whilst the clear speech synthesis congratulates you. For each level completed, you will receive a cool ten-thousand dollars reward - but will you survive to the end of the six stages so that you can spend it? **STA**



At the end of level 2 only the 'boss' stands between you and the hostage with the information (ABOVE). So by shooting him continually and accurately, the girl will escape and the despot will die.





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CIRCUS GAMES

'Ladieees aynd Gentlemeen, for your delight and delectation, and without the aid of a safety net, Tynesoft present all the fun and thrills of the circus - I thankyaw!'

— TYNESOFT (£24.95) —



One to four players can participate in this so-called international circus competition, and you have the option of playing specific acts or entering the full contest. You can also choose to compete against computer-controlled competitors. There are four acts which entail various feats of balance, daring and fearlessness and, during intervals, the inevitable clowns come on to entertain us with their antics. After you have entered your name and city on the competition roster - in my case, 'The Great Spillerini from Milano' - the Ring Master appears on screen to introduce the first act.

The screen reveals a tightrope stretched out high above the ring and

the audience stare up in anticipation. A curvaceous cutey stands at either end of the tightrope as your daring walker makes the long climb to the roof of the big top. He takes hold of his balancing pole and, pressing the firebutton, tentatively places a foot on the rope. The joystick has control over his movement and balance and pushing it forward sends him teetering along the rope. His balancing pole dips down to the left and right and you must compensate the balance by nudging the joystick in the opposite direction. To the right of the main arena, an overhead-view of the tightrope is supposed to aid your balance, but the



Contrary to JS, I wasn't particularly dazzled by Circus Games' bright lights. True enough, the presentation is very impressive, but, with only four events, it's not going to hold your interest for very long. Additionally, I would have thought that clowns played a key part in circus entertainment, but they are only used in the between-event animation sequences which rapidly annoy after a few games. With another four events, Circus Games would have been reasonable arcade-fare; as it stands, the variation is just too limited. Bring on the clowns...

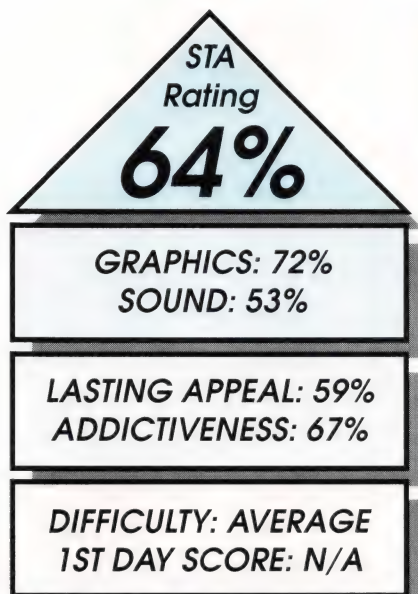
SM



Roll up....Roll uppp... come and join in Tynesoft's Circus games and try your hand at four different events.

realization that there is no safety net is quite unnerving. On reaching the other side, you have the option of walking back in reverse, or the computer will aid your crossing. Points are awarded for handstands, somersaults and cartwheels, which are achieved with various joystick and firebutton combinations. For the finale, the great Spillerini attempts to unicycle along the wire, which requires constant balance correction.

For the Next act, marvel as Spillerini squeezes into a pink and sequin leotard for the Trick Horse Riding. As she walks to the centre of the ring, a stallion gallops by and pressing the firebutton sends her leaping into the saddle. From this



position, and with various joystick and firebutton movements, you can make her swing from side to side, stand on the saddle, somersault and perform a handstand. Points are awarded for tricks and the number of circuits of the ring you manage without falling off - especially as Fifi the performing elephant was on before you! Cast your eyes skywards, Ladies and Gentlemen, as daring young Spillerini prepares for his heart-stopping trapeze act. Without the aid of a safety net, the aim is to get the

Delight and delectation? I'm not altogether sure whether Tynesoft's Circus Games manages to deliver either of these. Sure enough, all of the four events are well presented and enjoyable; the high-wire act being my personal favorite. But having played the game, I was left feeling as though I had been short changed - somehow there was just something missing. On further reflection, Circus Games is a well presented and enjoyable game; not one that I'd play over and over again, but one to break the tedium of the current software scene.

NC

trapeze swinging with left and right joystick manipulation, catch the trapeze and leap to another one which is set swinging in the opposite direction. An overhead view of the trapeze helps you time the leap and, after the solo act, you are joined by a catcher on the other trapeze.

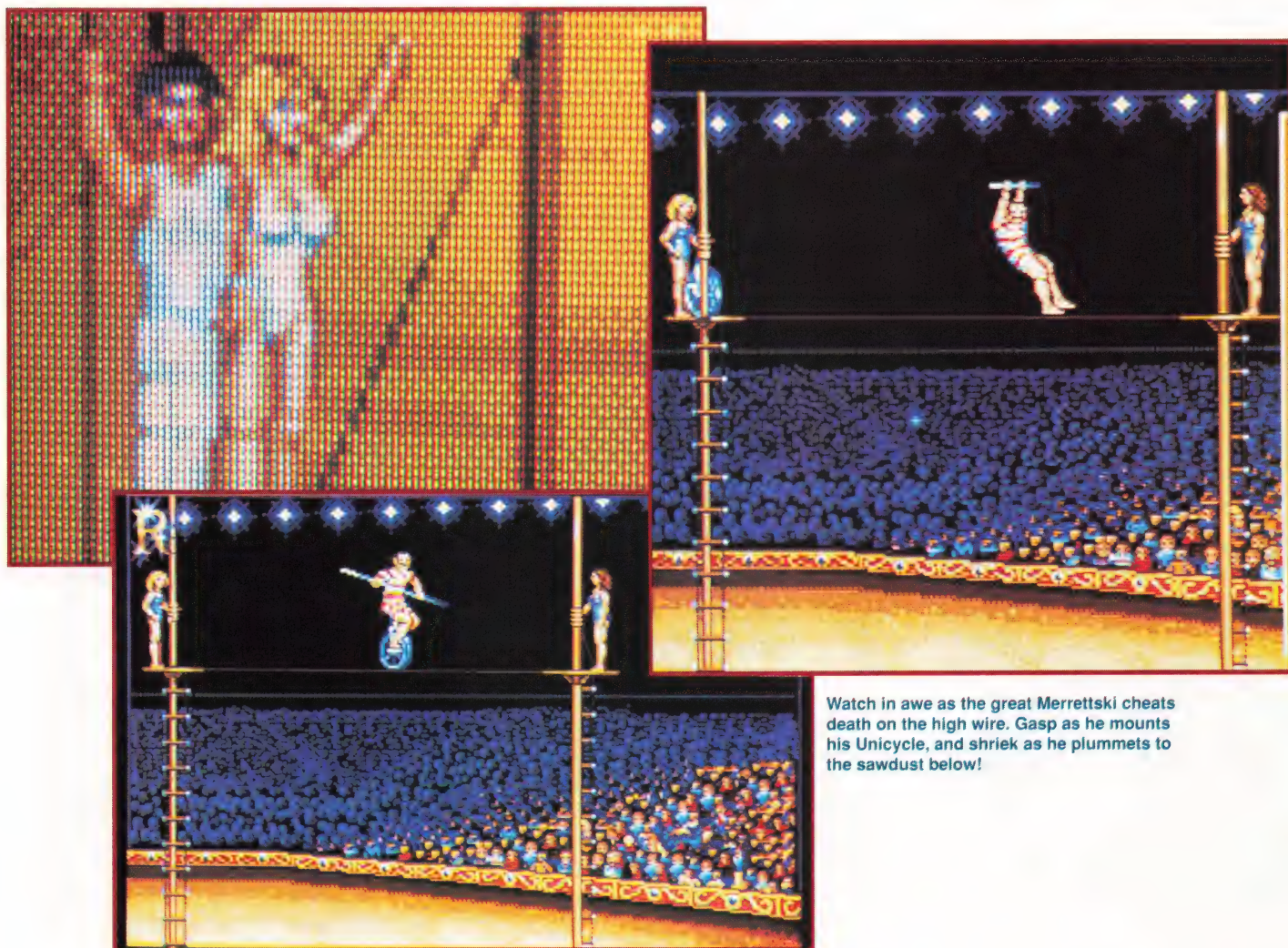
And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, for our grand finale tonight - truly a feat of death-defying stupidity! Armed with a mere kitchen stool and a whip, our resident nutter will attempt to train three man-eating Bengal tigers. The big cats enter the arena and prowl around the ring, and your objective is to make them perform various

When somebody dreams up a highly original concept in game software, such as Circus Games, there is no guarantee that it will translate successfully. History proves that it is often best to stick with the tried and trusted formulas. But in this case, Tynesoft's gamble appears to have paid off. Graphically, this game is a joy and, considering the nature of the game, the interpretation of the events is very effective and, generally, the game is very playable. But once you have mastered each event, there is no increment in difficulty to test your skills further. Additionally, the flow of the game is marred by Tynesoft's usual lengthy loading procedure between events.

JS

degrading tricks, such as jump through a hoop of fire and stand on a podium. Pressing the firebutton cracks the whip and an icon in the shape of a tiger's head shows which way the whip will travel. The tigers move closer and eventually go out of sight at the base of the screen. Suddenly, one of the cats launches itself at the tamer's throat, which prompts the ringmaster to appear and say: 'Oh dear, Ladies and Gentlemen, it looks like the show is over!'

STA



Watch in awe as the great Merrettski cheats death on the high wire. Gasp as he mounts his Unicycle, and shriek as he plummets to the sawdust below!

"Err... Emlyn! Which quiz programme commands the biggest weekday audience?"

"I know it... I know it... Princess Anne!"

"Err... wrong. It was Charlton Athletic in 1871"

A QUESTION OF SPORT

ELITE (£19.95)

The highly popular quiz program presided over by David 'err' Coleman and hotly contested by two teams of sportsmen, can now be enjoyed every day on your ST. Two players can participate in A Question of Sport, or you can pit your sporting knowledge against the computer. For some reason, the screen shows pictures of the authors of the game instead of sportsmen and women and your first task is to select a team. The joystick can be used to make the selections and answer questions during the game, or you can toil with some confusing key commands. There are six rounds in the game, beginning with the 'Pictureboard' round - Err... this is an individual round with no conferring. A picture of David Coleman appears on screen and the questions scroll through a large speech bubble protruding from his mouth. Each member of the team is asked to choose one of the twelve numbered squares on the board and the selected number turns into a symbol of a sport. David asks the question about the specific sport and four possible answers appear on screen. Using the joystick, you move a cursor bar over your answer. If you answer incorrectly, the question goes to the other side.

A Question of Sport is a great multi-player, after dinner-game, and so the main requirement for this program was that it could be played with the minimum of explanation. Elite have achieved this by designing a game which is both comprehensive and easy to play. There are thousands of questions and an inbuilt device ensures that you never get question repetition during the same game - a commendable interpretation of this highly enjoyable quiz!

JS

Personality' and in this team round, David gives you three clues to a sportsman or woman's identity. After each clue is given you can select your answer from a choice of four names, and a correct answer from the first clue scores three points, the second clue two points, and so on. If you fail to answer correctly, it goes over to the opposition for one point. Round Three is 'Home or Away' in which each member of the team can answer a question on their specific sport for one point, or risk a question on any subject for two. If you answer incorrectly or the time runs out, the question is given to the other side.

'What Happened Next' has proved to be the question which gets the family going. David describes an unusual occurrence in sport and you are given a choice of four possibilities of what happened next. Round five is the 'Quick Fire Round' in which you have 45 seconds to answer as many questions as possible. Again, after each question is given, you have the choice of four answers. The final round is another 'Pictureboard' round in which you select the remaining unanswered squares from the first round.

STA

Err... round two is 'Mystery

Visually and sonically average, A Question of Sport suffers from the fate of most quiz games - a lack of variety. After playing the game for some time, the questions began to repeat themselves, boredom set in and the game was relegated to the dark recesses of the software cupboard, never to be unearthed again. Extra question packs could be the answer, but if I had paid twenty quid for something that was already fairly limited, there would be no way I would pay extra for a few minutes more entertainment. I wasn't expecting a lot from this unusual licence, and nothing was delivered. It may appeal to members of the David Coleman fan club, but for me I'll sit it out.

SM



Elite's interpretation of this quiz is simple and uncluttered, and so the game can be played with the minimum of explanation.

STA
Rating

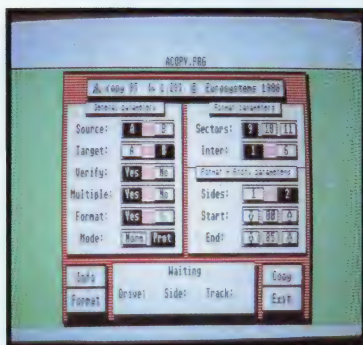
58%

GRAPHICS: 47%
SOUND: 50%

LASTING APPEAL: 62%
ADDICTIVENESS: 65%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: 58

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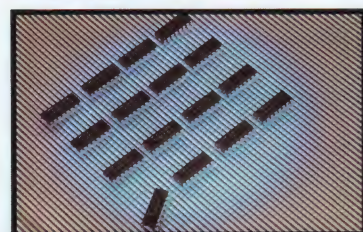
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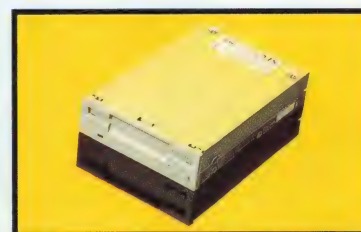
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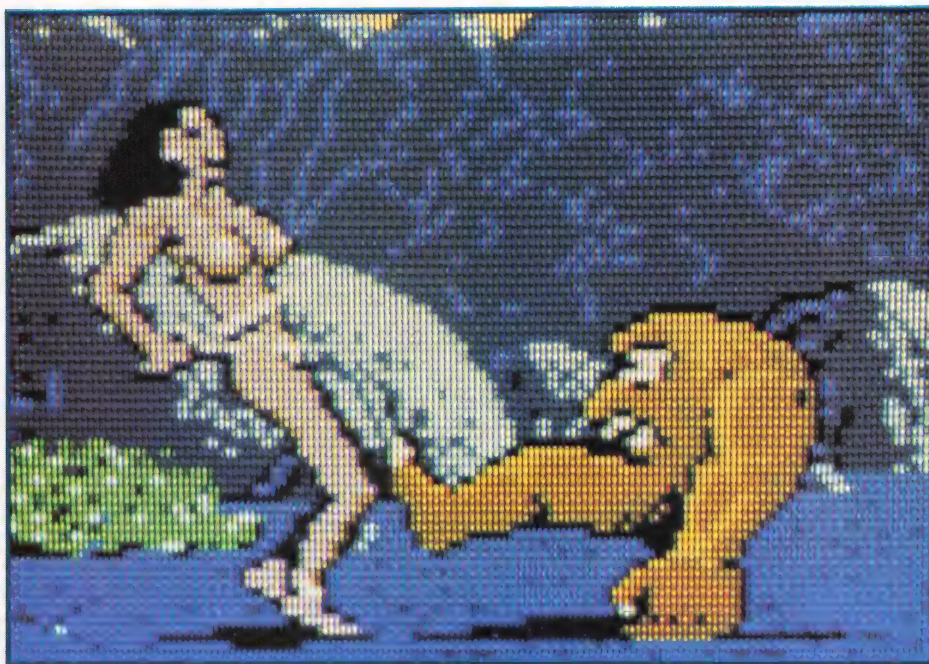
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Set over four sprawling levels, *Barbarian II* proves to be an excellent amalgamation of the Arcade/Adv and the Hack/Slash themes.

Palace knew that a sequel to the original Barbarian would have to be twice as bloody and even more barbaric. Of course, they have achieved this by enhancing the very aspects which got the original game banned in Germany. There are more opportunities to decapitate and be decapitated, and you may even be able to tear the heart out of one particularly unfortunate character. But is this increase in violence justified? Did Palace set out with the intention to shock and outrage the whole of Europe? A complete ban would have an adverse effect on sales! For those with a strong constitution, this sequel is a considerable improvement on the original, with a greater variety of fighting combined with an action-packed adventure. (Psst! I have to admit that I haven't enjoyed a game so much for ages!)

JS



"He's back! With a better-fitting wig and rippling muscles, the Barbarian makes a repeat appearance in the sequel to his much-heralded computer game. And this time he is going to finish Drax off for good!"

BARBARIAN II

PALACE (£19.95)

The evil magician Drax, having been defeated in his attempt to imprison Princess Mariana in the original *Barbarian*, has fled from his certain death, and exiled himself within the confines of an isolated castle. While hiding in the barren wilderness, his dark thoughts plotted revenge on the heroic Barbarian and the beautiful Mariana. Hearing of his malicious vendetta, the Barbarian decides to venture into the dangerous wastelands to finish Drax off, once and for all. Also wanting

vengeance, the beautiful Mariana followed, picking up her sword and joining the mighty warrior in his quest.

Pausing during the game's load, an opening screen offers you the choice of playing the Barbarian or the voluptuous Mariana. The two characters both have the same effectiveness and strength, the only difference being the weapons they use - the Princess wielding a mighty broadsword and the Barbarian a mighty double-headed axe. Once your warrior is chosen, the rest

Although the original Barbarian was horrendously playable, it suffered from looking like an 8-bit game. Barbarian II, however, is totally different, abandoning the one-on-one fighting theme for a larger, more varied, task. The cocktail of beat'em-up and arcade/adventure works exceptionally well, and is enhanced enormously by the monsters that lurk within its levels. These creatures are exceedingly imaginative, ranging from head-swallowing Saurian beasts and skull-regurgitating pit-dwellers to laser-emitting eyes. To protect himself, though, Barb has a wide vocabulary of fluidly animated moves, and the resulting effects are both gory and enjoyable. Barbarian II is an engrossing game that is both satisfying and compelling to play.

SM



of the game loads and you begin your four-stage task.

Each of the lands - the wasteland, the cave-system, the catacombs of Drax's castle, and Drax's lair - is inhabited by foul creatures, mutated by the sorcerer's inhuman spells, and all have orders to eliminate you. When engaging combat with the odious beasts, both you and your enemies'

state of health are represented by an energy bar at the top of the screen. This diminishes with every hit you receive, and, when it reaches zero, one of your five lives is lost, and your character slumps to his knees, only to reappear seconds later, rejuvenated. The creatures you encounter are some of the most original seen in a computer game, and vary from level to level. On level one, huge dinosaur-like, Saurian beasts lurch towards you, aiming to bite your head from your shoulders - something they do with a satisfying burp! Other levels feature giant grubs; laser-spitting eyeballs; a tentacled creature who dwells in one of the castle's pits, awaiting to snatch you by the waist if you mistime your leap; and a huge ogre, who, if your flying head-chop is timed correctly, can be killed by having his heart cut out and sent skidding across the room. Any creature despatched into the hereafter, implodes in a cloud of green gas with a satisfying whoosh, only to return after a short pause.

Each of the levels is a veritable maze, but the way to the level's exit is shown by a north-pointing, sword-like compass at the bottom of the screen. As you wander around the various screens, you will find useful objects nonchalantly lying around. These items can aid Barb or Mariana in their journey and, although they are not integral to solving the game, they can make the later stages easier - for instance, by disabling monsters. Along with the various orbs, keys and the invaluable hit-reducing shield, you will find skulls. These are extra lives, and are collected, as with any object, simply by walking over them. Whether you have collected all the useful items from a level or not, the level can be left. The exit to the next is easily distinguishable, as the text at the bottom of the screen begins to glow. Exit the screen and there will be a short lull in the action as the next screen loads.

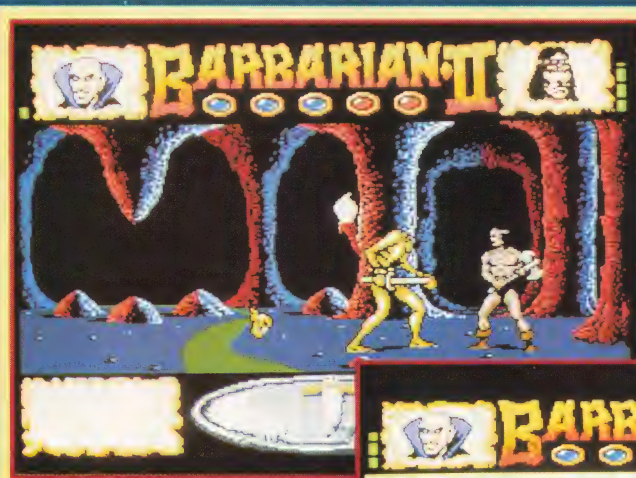
STA

STA
Rating
85%

GRAPHICS: 89%
SOUND: 73%

LASTING APPEAL: 83%
ADDICTIVENESS: 86%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: 44151



ACTION SHOT 2

...in Barbarian II they are back and even more grisly!



ACTION SHOT 1

The decapitation scenes were the main reason the original was banned in Germany....

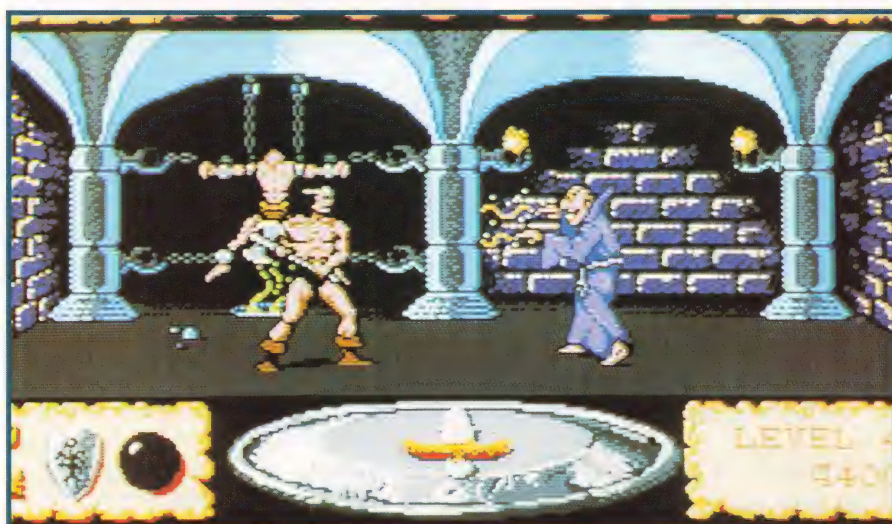


ACTION SHOT 3

You can even cut the ogre-like jailers heart out!!!

After the success of the first Barbarian, a sequel seemed inevitable. Now, after what seems an eternity, Palace have finally released The Dungeons of Drax. Combining the hack'n'slash gameplay with the tried-and-tested arcade/adventure formula, makes for an enjoyable, albeit grisly, game. The program's real quality, however, lies in the variety it offers. The monsters are incredible, and together with their gruesome sound effects they almost seem to come to life. Should you buy this game, persevere. The end sequence is one of the most impressive I've ever seen.

NC



"Fluck and Laws' rubber antics have had the nation in stitches for a couple of years now. As humour very rarely works in computer games, do they have what it takes to succeed?"

Well, they've really gone and done it now! World WaXr III has just ended, and the inhabitants of the Earth are now little piles of smouldering ash. Well, not all of them: The Pope, Maggie Thatcher, President 'Mad Dog' Botha, Ronnie Reagan, the Ayatollah 'look no hands!' Khomeini, and that glasnost man himself, groovy Gorbachev, all hid under the same lead-lined protective umbrella, and, when the sparks had flown, came out into the glowing, green light of day. Now was their chance! With only the other five to stop them, one of the survivors could quite easily take over the world - no matter how little was left of it!

The latex lunacy begins with the Queen (God bless her) - another survivor - presiding over the world and the six leaders acting as referee. The megalomaniacs are all depicted in true 'Cruelovision (TM)' and, using the joystick or mouse, you must guide the pointer to the two you want to slug it out. The last character you picked will be the one you control and, when about to fight, their face will be replaced by that of the enigmatic Mr. Death, clad beautifully in his back Lurex bathrobe.

The game now transports you to your opponent's home territory: the Vatican, complete with rockin' nuns; Number 10, Downing Street; Ronald MacReagan's burger bar; the Kremlin, Russia's new missile base; an old people's home for retired Ayatollahs; and a South African meeting hall. The fight is split into five bouts, with the winner of three going on to the next leader. The contenders are each armed with a weapon - in Botha's case, for instance, a soda syphon filled with white

That's one in the eye for His Royal coolness from Mr Botha.



SPITTING IMAGE

DOMARK (£19.95)

What more could you want than having your favourite and most hated celebs, politicians and royals caricatured in latex and lampooned on television? The answer, according to Domark, is a computer game in which... etc. Once again, licence kings, Domark, prove that you can turn just about anything into a computer game. Furthermore, call it Spitting Image and you can get away with showing a policeman urinating through the letterbox at number 10, one of the Pope's bishops firing condoms from his mitre, and jokes about the royal family which would have relieved you of the weight of your head in Tudor times. Initially, the characterizations are amusing and the game-play is entertaining, but it doesn't take long for the novelty to wear off to reveal a game which relies entirely on the popularity of the television programme.

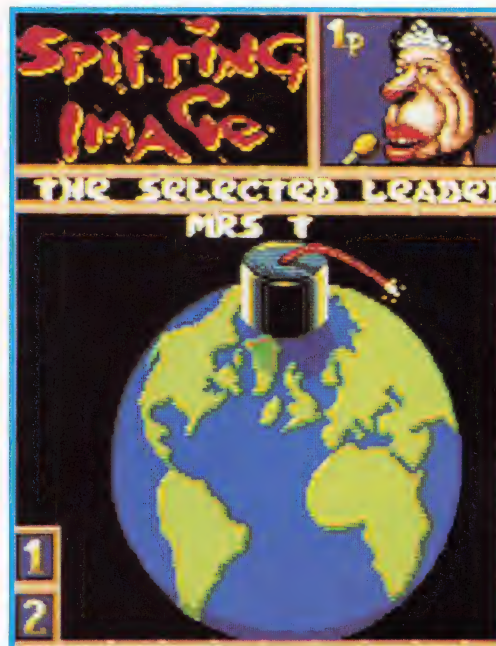
JS

With all of the things Spitting Image lampoons: politics, sport, television etc., you would have thought Domark could have come up with something a little more original than a beat'em-up. The graphics are fine, as is the sound, with both complementing each other perfectly, but the game itself falls into the trap of being too easy. Although the opposition do actually get harder as you progress, they can all be defeated by repeating a simple pattern of moves. The controls are very unresponsive and are akin to controlling a character who wades through a vat of treacle. A big disappointment from the company whose past releases have been of a high calibre.

SM

screen will now return to the menu screen, with the face of the defeated leader permanently replaced by that of the ever-grinning Mr. Death. Now it is time for you to choose another opponent and, if you like, a different fighter - and off you go again...

STA



paint - and a unique weapon which is activated by pressing the '0' key on the numeric keypad. This weapon, though appearing in many varied forms, basically just hurls an object at your opponent, reducing his health bar. When a contender has had his or her energy completely depleted, he will fall to the ground, with a decidedly disgruntled look on his face. The

STA
Rating
59%

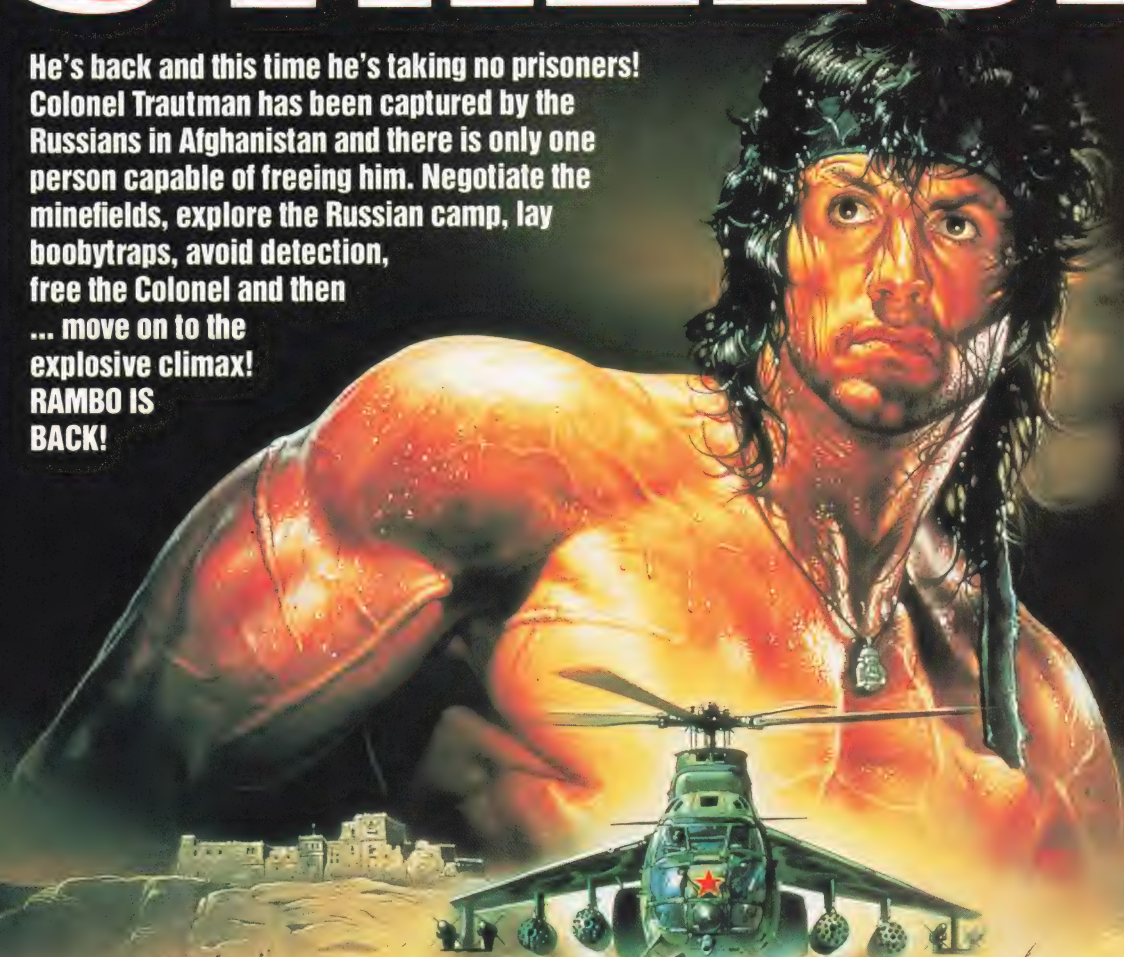
GRAPHICS: 59%
SOUND: 50%

LASTING APPEAL: 49%
ADDICTIVENESS: 62%

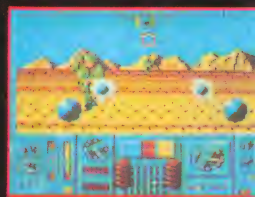
DIFFICULTY: EASY
1ST DAY SCORE: 10391

STALLONE

He's back and this time he's taking no prisoners! Colonel Trautman has been captured by the Russians in Afghanistan and there is only one person capable of freeing him. Negotiate the minefields, explore the Russian camp, lay boobytraps, avoid detection, free the Colonel and then ... move on to the explosive climax! **RAMBO IS BACK!**



RAMBO III



AMIGA
£24.95
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ATARI ST
£19.95
ATARI ST

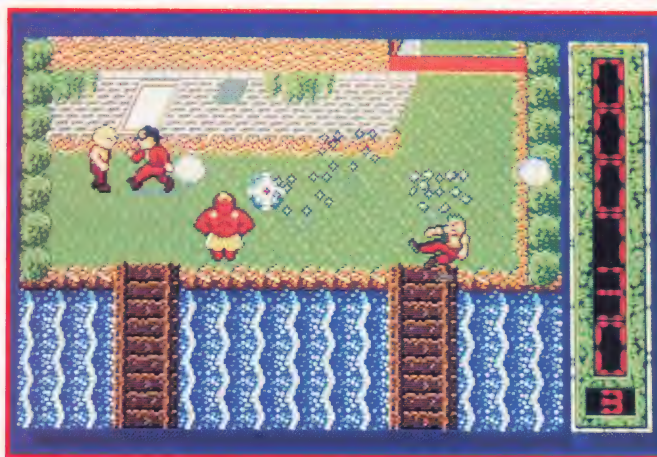
DESOLATOR

US GOLD (£19.95)

U.S. Gold can be a funny bunch: one minute they are releasing high-quality releases like Bionic Commando and Thunderblade, the next they spring rubbish like Desolator onto us. A conversion of an unknown coin-op called 'The Halls of Kairos', the game is a very basic Gauntlet-style romp, involving fighting your way up

a vertically-scrolling screen, collecting extra energy and rescuing kids who have been imprisoned behind magic mirrors.

Apparently, the evil Kairos has imprisoned all these kids and, being a square-jawed hero, it is up to you to free them. As Mac, the hero, you must run up the jerkily scrolling screen, using your fists to kill anyone who tries to sap your energy bar; and, in the time-old fashion, when it has gone you lose one of your four lives. Dotted along your way are several bonuses, and when these are collected, you will either have your energy topped up, be granted a limited supply of throwable weapons or temporarily freeze the opposition. Rescuing the kids is simply a matter of punching the green masks that adorn the walls, and once you have lost enough energy trying to position yourself, the kids will appear waiting to be col-

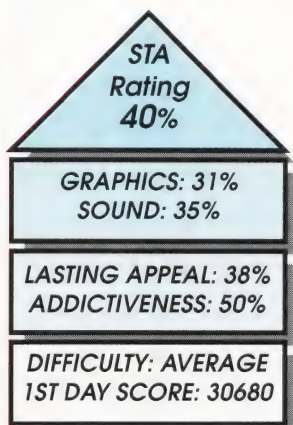


lected. Collecting enough of these freed boys and girls turns you into - wait for it - Macho Man. Basically, this means that Mac loses his shirt and becomes just that little bit tougher - which means he can wreck all that stands in his path. When Mac reaches the end of the present level, he must take on several of the enemy, all of whom swarm around attempting to deplete his energy. Finally, when you have killed sufficient, the next level will load and off you go again.

Having played Desolator for some time now, I can see why its arcade parent never rose above obscurity. It is a

very tedious game, requiring pixel-perfect positioning and the patience of Job. There is no feasible way that Mac will finish his task: the enemy are extremely fast, and Mac is so cumbersome and unresponsive that by the time you have managed to hit an assailant, you have already lost a considerable chunk of your energy. My immediate impressions with Desolator weren't that good, but with its poor graphics and sound and its forgettable gameplay, my opinion sank even lower. A below average game, and one that deserves no consideration.

STA



BOUNCE OUT

GODAX (£19.95)

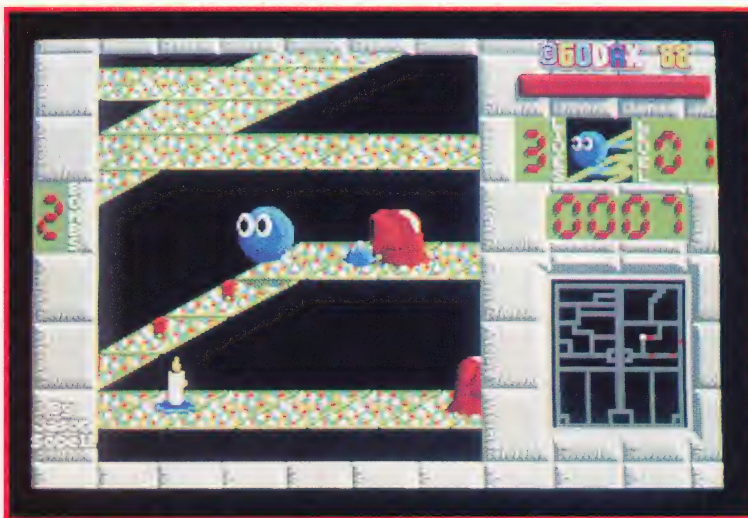
Following hot on the heels of Grandslam's Pacmania, comes Bounce-out, its first clone - and Godax's debut release. Utilising Pacmania's isometric perspective, the game has you, somewhat unoriginally, collecting the dots and extras littered around the landscape whilst avoiding the clutches of the omnipresent ghosts.

The action takes place

on a tiny, scrolling play area, with the remaining screen being filled with a map showing the positions of the ghosts and your remaining lives and weapons.

The weapons are an interesting addition to the idea, and change on alternate levels from bombs to bullets.

Using these helpful additions is simply a matter of getting a ghost to follow you, and pressing fire. If you are holding bombs, you will deposit one on the tile, and the ghost will run over it, only to be sent spinning into the hereafter, whereas, if you are using bullets, they will fire in the direction you are moving. Additionally, there are grey tiles spread randomly on the maze and, if you bounce on one, it will disappear, taking the ghost with it. Just to make sure we know it's Pacman,

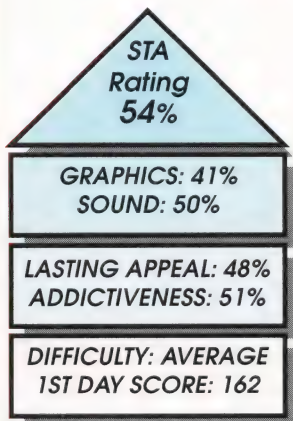


there are the obligatory power pills hidden around the maze and these allow you to turn the tables and squash the ghosts. As you bounce along on your merry way, every now and then a candle or a light bulb will inconspicuously pass you by and, if you collect it, you will receive a generous score bonus.

Bounce-out is a funny little game; it doesn't excel in any quarter, but is fairly playable all the same. The characters look as though they are made out of 'Play

Doh' and their expressions as they get killed are fairly amusing, and the sound is twee - but these factors are fairly unimportant in a game such as this. A nice, if not totally original, first release from Godax, and if they were to work on something just that little bit novel, I feel, bearing in mind Bounce-out's appeal, they could knock out something extremely good.

STA



HYPERDROME

EXOCET (£19.95)

Well, are you sitting comfortably? Then we'll begin. In the latest addition to the horizontally-scrolling brigade, you are a veteran fighter out to kill something you only know as the Hyperdrome. That's the flimsy plot over with; now the game! After a long absence from the software scene,

Exocet, who brought us the playable, Foundations Waste, and the toady Tau Ceti clone, Phantasm, have returned. But, sadly, they haven't been watching the software trends, as Hyperdrome is a game we have all seen a dozen times, only with different graphics.

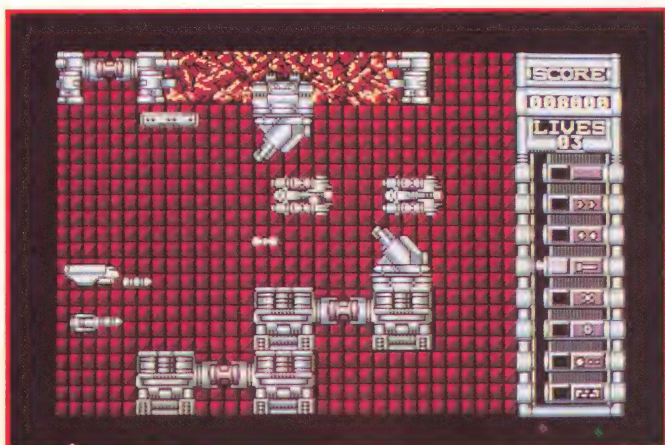
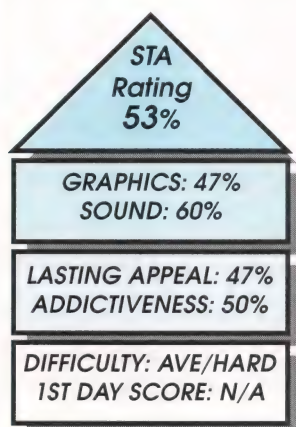
Having been dropped into the action by a massive transporter, there is a brief load and the action begins. There are six levels to fight your way through, each housing a different graphical look, not to mention hundreds of aliens and space-craft-shooting gun turrets. Initial impressions, as I cruised the weird landscapes, were good: there is some attractive, multi-layer parallax scrolling and the graphics are generally crisp and clear, but then the aliens appeared, wiping out my craft instantly. This happened

a lot during the first couple of games, with very little progress being made. However, forcing myself to continue, I practised... and practised... and practised, until, eventually, I made it to outer-space. Now, after a brief confrontation with a few more puny aliens, I went on to meet the, what now seems to be, obligatory mothership. What this was supposed to be, I'll never know - I can only say it looked a bit like loads of innertubes welded together! Defeat this unoriginal beast, and there will be another, intrusive, load before it will be time to start

on the next, harder level.

Well, that's it! Not a great deal to it really. The following waves are all incredibly hard, with the constant barrage of aliens, stray bullets and varied motherships always threatening to part you with one of your ten lives. And it is for this reason that I cannot recommend Hyperdrome: it's dated-looking and sounding, repetitive, and nothing we haven't seen before. Another shoot'em-up to add to the massive pile of space flotsam, I feel.

STA



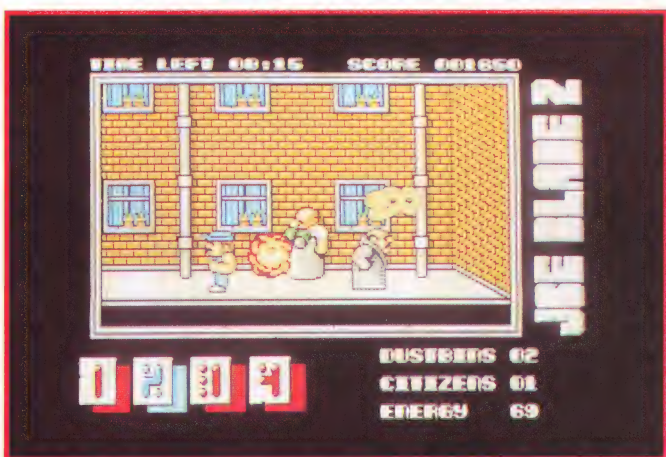
JOE BLADE II

PLAYERS (£19.99)

Joe Blade, "saviour of our nation", "hero of the Earth" and other unlikely titles, is back. Fresh from his success in rescuing world leaders, he returns to find home a very different place. Muggers have practically taken over, and families dare not venture from their homes. Realising something must be done, Joe takes off his army uniform, revealing

his camouflage vest, and sets off to right rights.

Well, that's the scenario for the sequel of what was probably the best-selling ST budget title last year, Joe Blade. The game itself is basically the first one revisited, except that Joe no longer carries a gun, but must kick any assailants instead. This is achieved by leaping over a running thug, and clipping his head with your size elevens. Providing he, too, isn't jumping, he will explode, somewhat unrealistically, in a whoosh of flames, leaving a 200-points bonus instead of ashes. As in the first, there are people to be rescued and puzzles to solve. Cleverly, these factors are incorporated when Joe rescues one of the sixteen wandering citizens. On contact with these raincoated chaps, the screen will change to one of four puzzles. These simply require

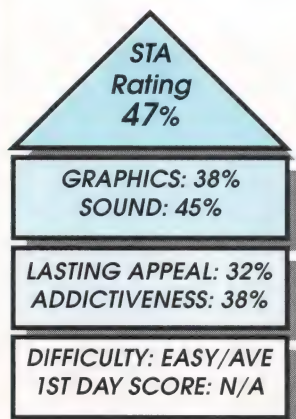


number co-ordination and, whilst experimenting, I found that nine times out of ten, they can be solved just by repeatedly pressing fire. Each one has a limit of one minute and if this expires your game is over. Additionally, Joe's mission can be stopped prematurely by two things: the ten-minute timer running out; or his life force expiring - though both of these can be replenished by collecting a food parcel or a conspicuous bouncing clock. On his travels, Joe will encounter bouncing dustbins which, like petrol tokens, will give you a

bonus for every five collected.

Joe Blade 2 is too similar to its predecessor to be worthwhile. The playing area seems considerably smaller than that of the first, and the game is a little too easy, requiring very little skill to kill the muggers. I feel that Players should have tried a different style of game instead of emulating the first, because, even with the original Joe Blade given free, this package doesn't represent good value.

STA





Having only seen the coin-op once, the only comment I can make on LED Storm's faithfulness is that the graphics are much smaller. However, the game plays at a fast rate - perhaps just a little too fast to require any skill - and has its fair share of addictivity. The routes could have had a few more obstacles thrown in, and the overall presentation improved, but, apart from that, LED Storm is a competent and playable game.

SM

For some reason, whilst playing LED Storm, I couldn't stop myself from humming a perfect rendition of a certain, catchy Sega arcade game tune. Firstly, the music which accompanies this game is horrendous, and so I turned down the volume. Secondly, it bares more than a passing resemblance to Spy Hunter, with certain bouncing car elements from Up'n'Down. That aside, this 'feature-packed' game is quite enjoyable really, and there is enough variety to maintain your interest for a while. This is a winning arcade game formula and so you really can't go wrong.

JS

LED STORM

CAPCOM (£19.95)

"Hot from the arcades, Capcom's LED Storm bursts onto the ST. Is its driving format getting a little 'tyred'?"

LED Storm is the latest entrant predicting what will be the sport of the future. The acronym of Lazer Enhanced Destruction, LED storm is a high-speed race game, set atop the skyscrapers of a futuristic city. The race takes place across nine sections, taking you from the starting point, Capital City, through forests, barren wastelands, tunnel systems, and snow-covered pipeways, until you eventually reach your

goal, Sky City.

The race begins with your onboard computer welcoming you and showing you the proposed route. A prod of the firebutton exits this screen and the view changes to one above your car. Raring to go, a three-second timer counts down - and you're off! You race up a vertically-scrolling screen, unarmed, but with ability to leap. Other vehicles on the highway do not have this facility, but attempt to ram you, causing you to spin and costing you valuable energy. However, by pressing fire, you can launch your car into the air, hopefully, crushing your opponent beneath its wheels. Not all vehicles can be crushed though, as towards the later levels, larger,

indestructible lorries appear, and your only course of action is to avoid them.

Cruising up the road, avoiding other cars, is just one of the many hazards LED Storm scrolls at you: huge sections of the road are missing and can only be cleared by passing over springboard-like objects; irritating frogs cling to your car, slowing it down, and can only be removed by veering rapidly from side to side. Additionally, when you least expect it, the road splits into two separate lanes, normally causing you to crash into the junction, slowing you down or destroying you. Should your car be wrecked, a large transporter trundles onscreen with a replacement. Once in a suitable starting place, pressing fire puts you back in the running, albeit with considerably less energy.

Your game ends when all of your energy has been depleted, but this disqualifiable fate can be delayed by collecting bonus fuel cannisters along the route. Should you manage to reach the level's checkpoint, your computer screen will reappear, charting your progress, before returning you to the next heat.

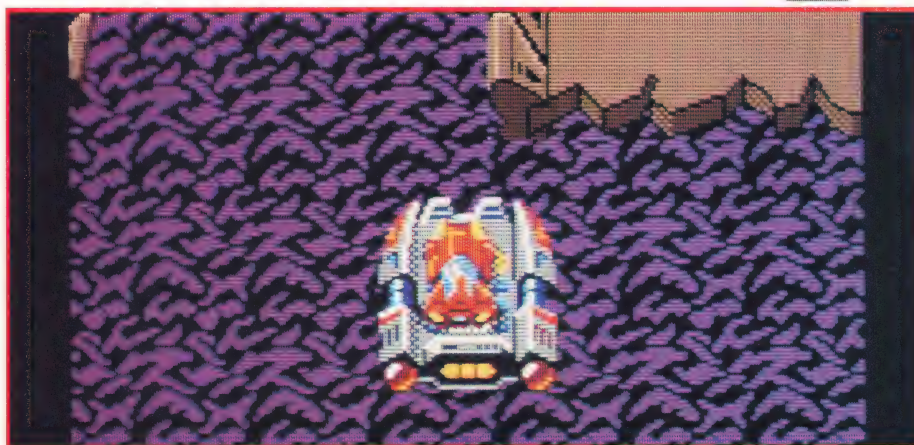
STA

STA
Rating
55%

GRAPHICS: 56%
SOUND: 35%

LASTING APPEAL: 49%
ADDICTIVENESS: 64%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: 106655





ANDES ATTACK

LLAMASOFT

announce the release, on 23rd January 1989, of
ANDES ATTACK, JEFF MINTER'S new game
for the **ATARI ST**.

- ★ **ANDES ATTACK** is the re-creation of a 1982 LLAMASOFT product, which was based on a classic arcade game and originally programmed for the VIC 20.
- ★ The new **ANDES ATTACK** takes full advantage of the **ST**'s capabilities to update the concept and to further improve the game's proven appeal - the elements of speed, strategy and control are beautifully combined. The game's graphics are detailed and amusing but the main aim of the programming has been on **playability, the basis of sustained player interest**.
- ★ Control of the defending space craft and its weapons by mouse and keyboard is ingenious and effective - it needs to be good to give the user a fighting chance! For newcomers to such hectic action a 'Training Mode' is included in the game facilities.
- ★ **ANDES ATTACK** will appeal to computer games players, old and new, and to arcade game enthusiasts.
- ★ The package includes an entry form for a high score competition with a substantial prize, the final stage to be in a public venue, possibly at the next **ATARI Show**.
- ★ **Recommended Retail Price - £9.95**

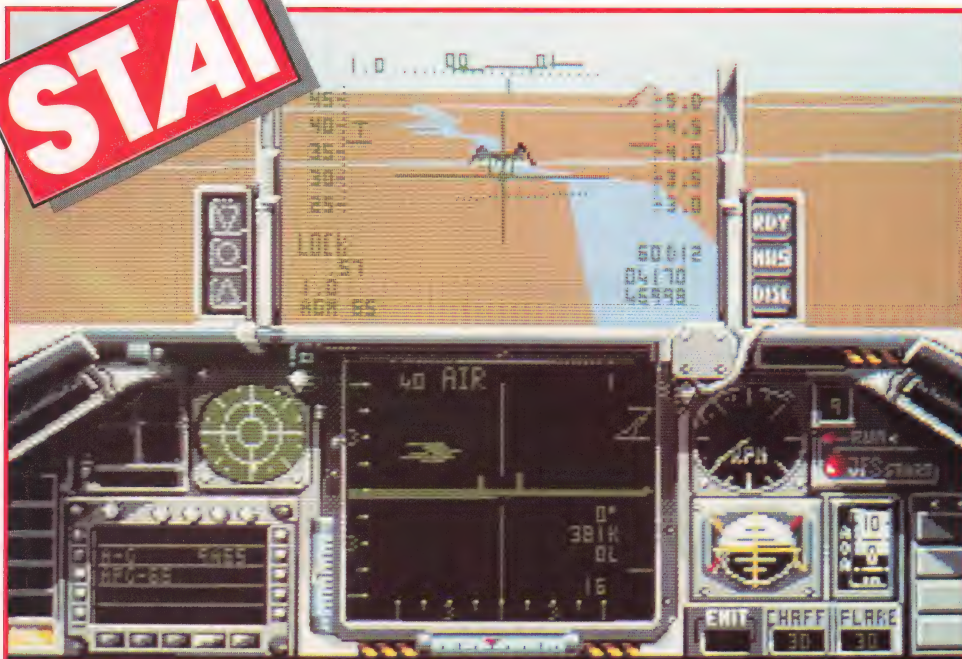
ANDES ATTACK — DEFEND OR DIE!

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STAI

As you close in on the cantilever bridge, you pick the target, ready to unleash your AGM 65 missiles.



If I had been designated another three pages, I could have done Falcon greater justice. As ST users, we have a veritable hangarful of flight simulations at our disposal, dealing with commercial and military aircraft, both prop-driven and jet-engined. But few of these games manage to strike a successful balance between accurate simulation and entertaining game-play and so the result is either a stuffy and long-winded simulation or an unrealistic and pointless shoot'em-up. Simulation specialists, Spectrum Holobyte, intended Falcon to be the game which succeeded where others failed. And by combining a faithful simulation with just the right level of game interest, that is exactly what they have achieved. Falcon is simply magnificent!

JS

FALCON

"In the wild, the falcon is swift, adaptable, economic and deadly - a natural inspiration for the design of a military jet fighter!"

■ MIRRORSOFT (£24.99) ■

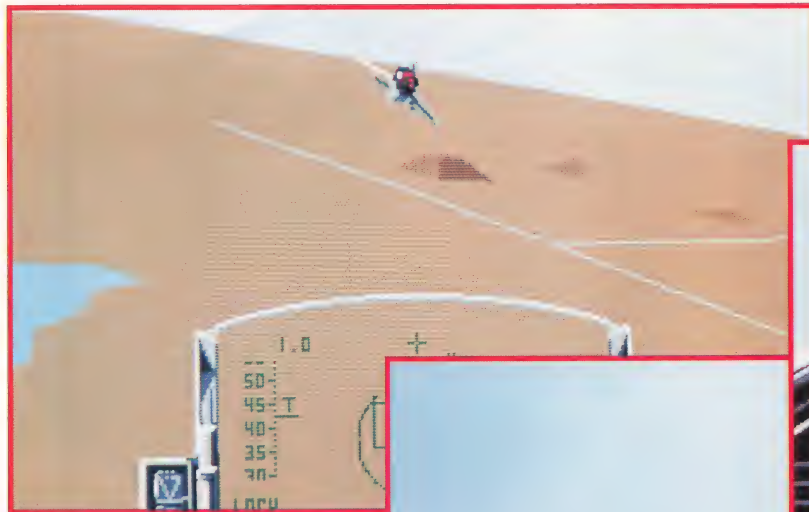
Traditionally, aircraft simulations are packaged with huge flight manuals, and Falcon is no exception. It describes, in detail, the F16 Falcon, mission instructions, controls, commands and instrumentation, as well as containing a comprehensive flight tutorial. The level of difficulty in Falcon is depicted by USAF ranks and the authors advise that you opt for the lowest rank, 1st Lieutenant,

"Oh no, not another flight simulator!", I hear you say. This time, however, you are wrong. Falcon is not just any flight simulation program; Spectrum Holobyte have produced the most realistic and compelling game I have ever had the pleasure of playing. The graphic update is second-to-none; the sound is very convincing, and combined with the sampled speech, these aspects all help make Falcon an experience not to be missed.

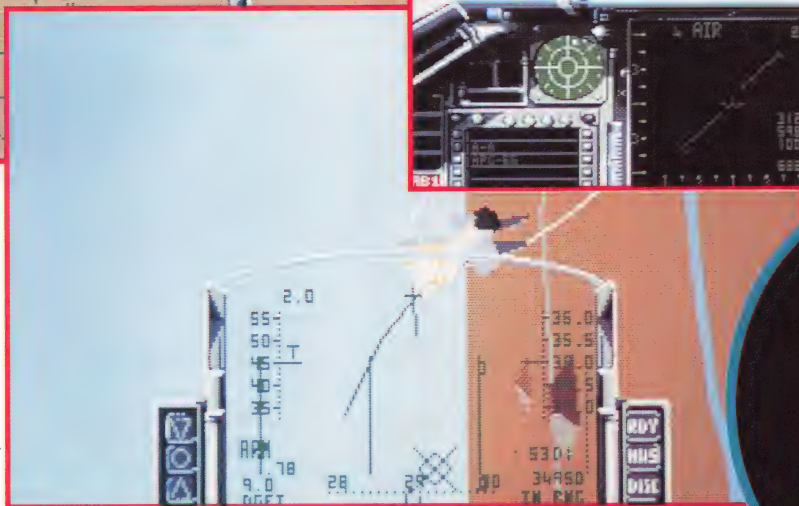
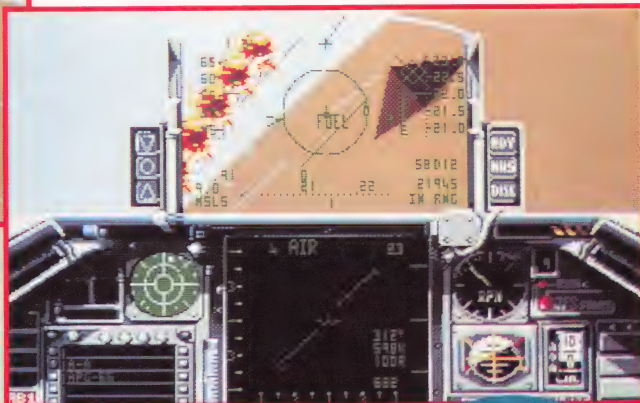
NC



--- STA 38 STA ---



The MiG defeats my missile option, so I go for the guns. Pulling hard into the MiG, I manage to fire a burst into the Commies cockpit-Splash one MiG! The reward? - A hard-won DFC.



for your inaugural flight. Higher ranks progressively increase the overall difficulty of the simulation and the jet becomes more sensitive and less forgiving of pilot error. Regardless of the rank, you have twelve missions to choose from, which range from training and reconnaissance to air combat and air-to-ground assault. Additionally, you can choose how many MiGs you want to combat.

On entering your name on a duty roster, you are presented with an armament screen where you are greeted by the ground-crew chief. A 1st Lieutenant has unlimited armament and, for the inaugural flight, 'Sarge' has already equipped the jet. Higher ranks must select their own weaponry and fuel, taking into consideration the jet's balance and carrying capacity. Using the mouse, and with polite advice from 'Sarge', you can equip the jet with all-aspect Sidewinders, Mavericks and Durandals, as well as a Radar Jamming Pod and external fuel tanks for extended mission time. Any decisions you make in the arming stage are reflected in the jet's performance in flight. There is a control menu at the top of the screen and before you embark on a mission you must choose your mode of control: keyboard, mouse or, preferably, joystick. Additionally, you can link up two computers via the printer port with Falcon, either ST-to-ST or ST-to-Apple Mac.

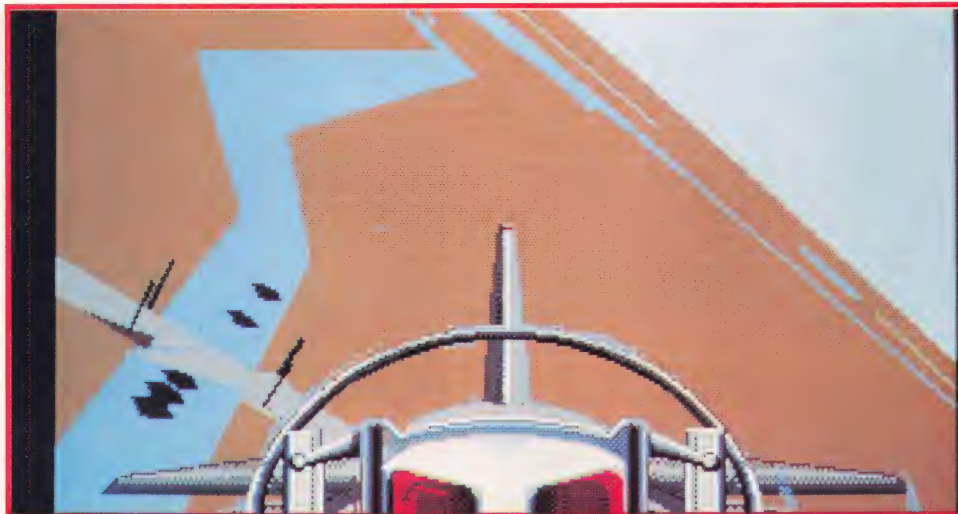
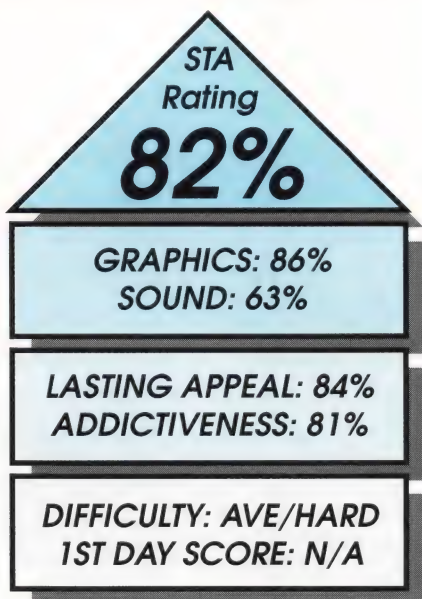
Well, what can I say? I've clocked up at least 12 hrs flying time at Major level and, for me, it's only bettered by real flight. There is no doubt in my mind that Falcon is the best combat flight simulation available at the present time; it is fast, smooth and very realistic. Flying at higher levels, with realistic flight performance and an extremely proficient enemy, not to mention the threat from SAMs, all combine to make for a very high cockpit workload. It really makes you respect the guys who are up there doing it for real. I cannot recommend this simulation more enthusiastically.

MM

The screen changes to show the cockpit orientation, which presents an array of displays and gauges, as well as a Head-up Display. The HUD comprises an Airspeed Scale, Gravity Force Indicator, Altitude Scale and 5 Mile Radar Ranging Scale. Both the HUD and the conventional console instrumentation work in conjunction with the joystick control and many key-

board commands. But first let's get the bird airborne before going into further detail. There is a diagram of the many keyboard commands, but the absence of a keyboard overlay is an unforgivable oversight. The jet is positioned on the runway and, before take-off, all radar equipment must be turned off. The pipes have already been lit, and pressing the Plus and Minus keys regulates the throttle power - 'Caution... caution!' A seductive female voice warns that you have neglected to release the wheel brakes, but a press of the 'W' key rectifies the fault and the jet begins to taxi along the runway. A tap of the throttle increases the ground speed and slight joystick adjustments are necessary to keep the jet central. Then gradually pulling back on the joystick achieves take-off.

The seductive voice of caution speaks once more, reminding you to retract the landing gear. The joystick substitutes for the Control Yoke and the jet responds in the usual fashion. Initially, the confusing array of gauges, digital displays and weaponry sights on the HUD is baffling, which at 40,000 feet is a little disconcert-



ing. But quick reference to the cockpit display diagram familiarizes you with the basic functions, such as altitude and air-speed, and the other features are self-explanatory and can best be described in action. Nudging the joystick forwards sends the jet into a dive with the Altimeter monitoring your rate of descent - about a thousand feet per second - and a Gravity 'G' meter marking the G force exerted on the pilot. In higher ranks, the jet must be flown with more caution, as frequent directional alterations and rapid altitude changes can result in pilot Blackout or Redout. Naturally, this arouses some concern and the voice synthesis speaks with more urgency: 'Pull up... pull up!' A Flight Path Ladder on the HUD indicates the gradient of your descent and the jet responds immediately as you pull back on the joystick. At low altitudes, you can see detail on the desert terrain, and pressing the 'C' key toggles a 'COMED' Screen Radar Map, which displays the ground in greater detail as well as pinpointing your position in relation to enemy ground targets. Adjacent to this, a small, round radar shows the position of enemy jets in a combat situation.

During combat, the HUD can really be

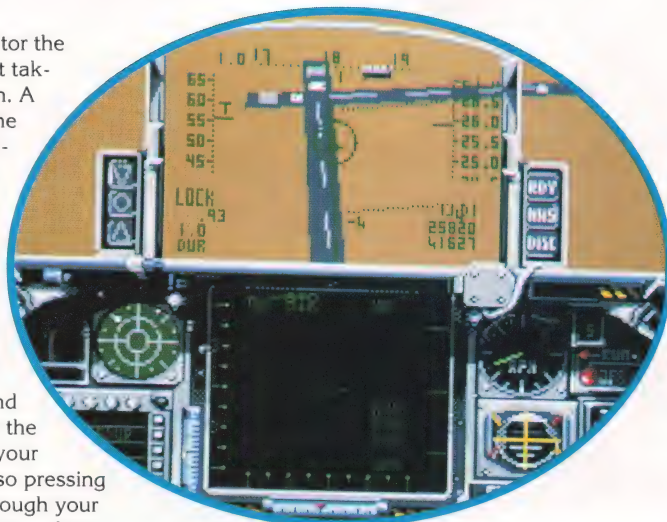
appreciated as you can monitor the attitude of the aircraft without taking your eyes off the situation. A 'Threat Warning System' is the first indication of enemy presence and the onboard computer goes to work. An Angle of Attack Indexer pinpoints the MiG's position and a secondary search-sight indicates which way he is heading. There is a feature which changes your vision of perspective, both inside the cockpit and out, and this helps when searching for the enemy jet. The MiG stays in your sights for a split second and so pressing the 'bracket' keys toggles through your missile stock. Selecting a Heat-seeking Sidewinder, you aim the weaponry-sights and press the firebutton to send the missile chasing after those white hot pipes. Unlike the Falcon, the MiGs are equipped with radar-guided missiles giving them a distinct advantage. If you hit the enemy jet, you can select an outside-cockpit view and watch as the MiG disappears in flames. If the confrontation ends unfavourably, still

screen-shots show the outcome: plane hit, crash, explosion and funeral flypast. An alternative and happier ending results if you safely acti-

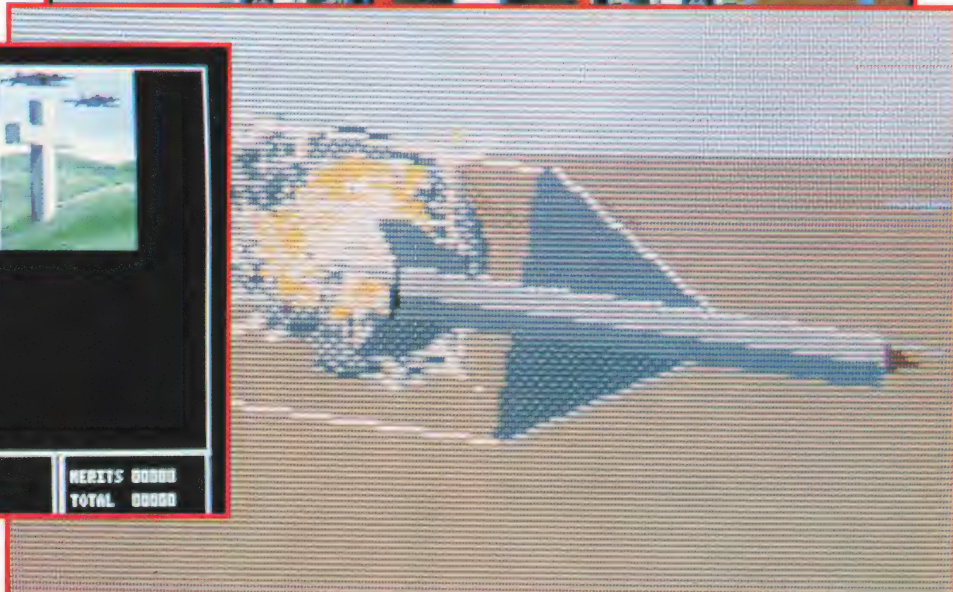
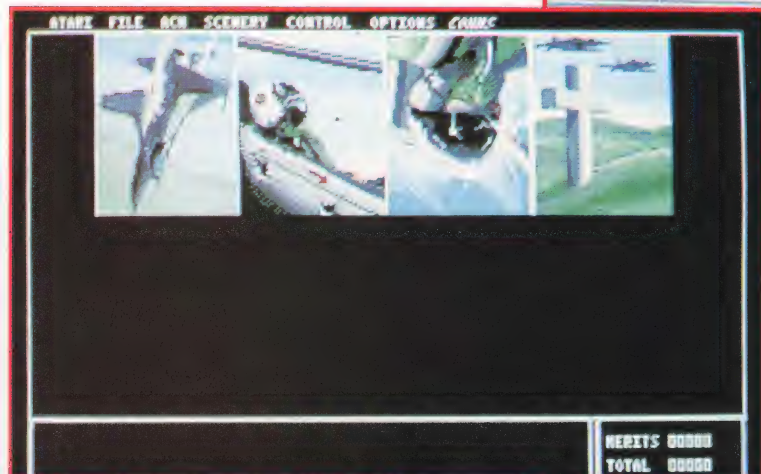
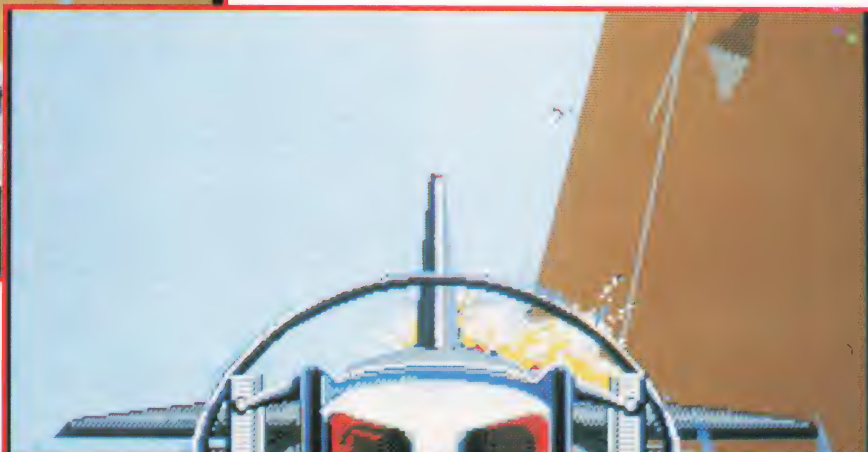
vate the ejector seat: Eject, chute open, rescue, injured neck.

In addition to air-to-air combat, other missions incorporate air-to-ground assault. For example, in 'Dragon's Tail', 'Dragon's Jaw' and 'Double Dragon', your task is to follow heading instructions, locate and destroy a suspension and cantilever bridge. The 'Milk Run', however, is described as 'a Rookie confidence-builder', in which you practise Maverick missile delivery; in 'Rattle Snake Roundup', you must locate and destroy three SAM sites and bomb them with Mavericks. Finally, the massive Durandal missiles can be used to put gaping holes in the enemy's runway in 'Hornet's Nest'.

STA



Closing in on the MiG, he pulls a high-G yoyo, gets into my 6 O'clock and fires a missile up my tailpipe! The ejection was unsuccessful - another pilot augers in.



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FREEDOM

— COKTEL VISION (£19.95) —

"With computer games getting more crass by the week, Freedom touches on the delicate subject of slavery. Have companies exceeded the boundaries of good taste?"

Set during the eighteenth century, when slavery was at its worst, you play the part of a rebellious cane cutter, who must use his or her considerable courage to unite the rest of the plantation to overthrow the white sugar magnates. For too long, you feel your people have been treated badly, and now something must be done....

Before you begin your task, you must choose your character from one of four: Solitude, Makandal, Sechou or Delia; each of whom has different health and strength statistics as well as a particular skill. Having picked your freedom fighter, another screen opens showing the plantation and who is in charge, as well as the

statuses of the various natives - it is from here that useful information can be gleaned on who may help in your plot. The action now switches to that of a map of the plantation. Your torch-wielding character is represented by a cluster of pixels, and the mouse is used to guide him or her around. To enter a building you must approach a community and click on the mouse. Another screen will now open showing you a small group of huts. Clicking on the door of the huts reveals a picture of its occupant, and clicking on this will prompt a reaction indicating whether they will revolt or not. For the most part, it is the menials, such as the cutters who are willing to fight, but the white mens' servants are normally too frightened.

Even though your recruiting is done at night, there are guards and dogs patrolling the area. If you run into these, a window will open showing the dog barking. If you do not clear the area as soon as possible, a sub-game will be entered which involves

Behind the pretty graphics and impressive sound of Freedom, there is a repetitive game trying to come out. The main part of the game consists of running around, recruiting people, and before very long this gets extremely boring. The sub-games help a little, but usually, with the mouse controls being very sluggish, it is impossible to complete them - especially in the fighting scenes. Freedom deals with an extremely dodgy subject but, thankfully, doesn't exploit it. It's just a pity the actual game isn't better.

SM

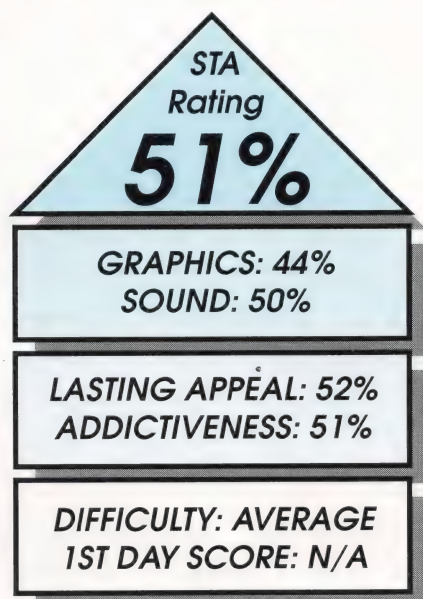
Firstly, graphic artists Chosse and Truca must be commended for the magnificent screens in Freedom - it is sad that presentation is so rarely praised! But is this art for art's sake? Is an elaborate presentation lost on us games players, who merely hanker for a few minutes of amusement? Like a child who pleads for an expensive present all year and, when Christmas comes, derives more pleasure from a large cardboard box, simplicity is cheaper for the creators and often just as entertaining, if not more so, for the player. As arcade/adventures go, Freedom is adequate and, as described, the artwork is outstanding. But it failed to inspire this 'fringe' adventurer.

JS

you fighting off the dog's attack with your can-knife. However, by visiting the resident medicine-man, a dog poison can be used to kill the dog - saving a lot of time and risk. But if you do receive any injuries, he can, to an extent, heal those, too. Even worse than being savaged by a dog, is being attacked by a guard. This involves another sub-game, with beat'em-up overtones, as you attempt to fight off the ruthless guard. Lose, and you suffer a crippling fate that ensures you will never cause trouble again.

As you traverse the plantation, you can visit the sugar stores or your masters' houses. At the bottom of the screen, amongst the options, will be new options: burn it down, or confront the man. Should you burn the stores, an animated picture of your pyromania will appear, but if you confront the man, once again a fight will ensue.

STA



Chuckie Egg

ARCADE STYLE GAME

from one to four players. Who'd have thought a country farmyard could be so stressful? You must collect the eggs before the nasties get out and eat up all your corn. Watch out for the crazy duck - if she gets out of the cage, you're in real trouble! You must collect all the eggs to proceed to the next screen. Look out for hidden eggs!

CONTROLS

Select your own keys or joystick. Full instructions included in the program.

GAME PLAY

The game plays over 4 groups each of 8 screens which become progressively more difficult. Survive all 32 screens and the speed then increases to present

even greater challenges. The game will play an indefinite number of levels. There is no limit to the high score table!

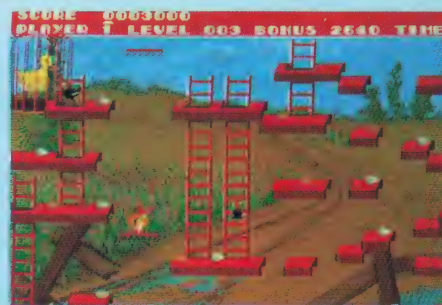
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From city skyline to open sea, Thunderblade is explosive action from start to finish.



coin-ops, U.S. Gold step up to have a bash at the second. Can they succeed?"

THUNDERBLADE

US GOLD (£19.95)

After years of planning, the evil dictator, General Swindells, has achieved his ultimate aim, and has started to invade our country. Previous attempts to halt his rapid progress have been futile, with the General publicly humiliating and executing any survivors. Spies infiltrating his lair, have found that his base is split into four sections: a huge, sky-scrapered city; a mountain-surrounded desert; a river delta; and the refinery where he produces all the fuel for his armies' vehicles. Realising that striking here, at the heart of



his operations, would stop the onslaught, the government sent their remaining military in to destroy the area. Unfortunately, the cumbersome nature of the tanks and A.T.V.s, made them a sitting duck, and, one by one, the assault squad was eliminated. A tactical decision had to be made. If a ground force was no good, the logical step was to take to the skies. Jets were too fast to be manoeuvred through the tortuous streets of the cities, so the use of a helicopter was decided upon. Being the most experienced, not to mention one of

Each time U.S. Gold produce a coin-op conversion, they set a new standard of excellence which makes life a little more difficult for other software developers. After the disappointment of Afterburner, which was a sickly pale reflection of its arcade counterpart, Thunderblade has re-established our faith in conversions for the ST. As we have come to expect from the pride of Birmingham, this is a faithful reproduction of the arcade version - explosive and brutally competitive!

JS

"After Activision's failed attempt at converting one of the Sega mega

Q: Never mind the hype, what's the game like?

A: Brilliant! U.S. Gold have succeeded in making ThunderBlade one of the most impressive arcade conversions to date. The sound and graphics are exceptional; the gameplay, albeit somewhat difficult, is also well implemented. The only real difficulty I encountered were the controls - still, after some time they are quite easy to master. However, I reckon no-one will complete this game in a hurry.

NC



the few remaining pilots, you clamber aboard the purring 'chopper and head towards your destiny...

Taking the leading role in your country's last hope, you must fight your way through each of Thunderblade's four sections, with each section being split into three sub-levels, making twelve levels in all. During play, the view of the helicopter switches from one of a vertically-scrolling shoot'em-up, to one from behind the 'chopper, in first-person perspective. The General's armies are both air and ground-based, and to deal with these you are armed with unlimited rounds of bullets and straight-line, air-to-ground missiles. Both are accessed by pressing fire, with the missiles being launched at regular intervals.

You begin your mission poised to take off. Pulling back on the joystick causes the helicopter to rise, with the ground-based objects getting impressively smaller as you ascend, and pushing forwards whilst

depressing fire, causes you to accelerate. The distance you have to travel before a level is complete is represented by a little icon at the top of the playing area, and when this reaches the right-hand side of the screen, the helicopter will pause, and the screen pan, camera-style, to behind the helicopter, with the buildings scrolling towards you. The attacking planes, tanks etc., appear in groups of four or five, spewing huge golden fireballs, contact with which is fatal, causing your 'chopper to crash, wrecked, to the ground. This must only

After the disappointment of Afterburner, my hopes for Thunderblade weren't particularly high. However, with its colourful, clear graphics and excellent sound, I was soon won over. The control system can prove a little tricky, and on many occasions, when I wanted to accelerate, I began plummeting to the ground; but after a while it started to flow and a fair bit of progress was made. The game recreates everything from the coin-op, and I was impressed in particular by the speed of the graphics update. Basically, Thunderblade is as close to the massive arcade machine as technically possible, and for that reason, fans should take it for a test flight.

SM



happen five times or you will die, ending your mission somewhat prematurely. Shooting the airborne assailants isn't too much of a problem, relying on your machine guns; but the destruction of the ground-based tanks and vehicles requires forethought, as the missiles take a while to reach their target.

The third and final stage of a section consists of an enormous fortress-like ship. You approach it from behind, and as you skim along its surface, you must destroy all of its death-dealing emplacements. When you finally scrape your way through to the front, you will receive several bonuses based on the number of hits you scored and the time taken. For the most part, the fortress sections are viewed from above, but when you reach the final section, the refinery, the first-person perspective is used. The command centre beyond the refinery is literally covered in cannons, all of which randomly disappear making them difficult to destroy. As these are blown up, the centre's defences get steadily weaker until, eventually, it is just you blasting the central tower. Destroy this, and the mad General's plan has been defeated, and your country is once again safe.

STA

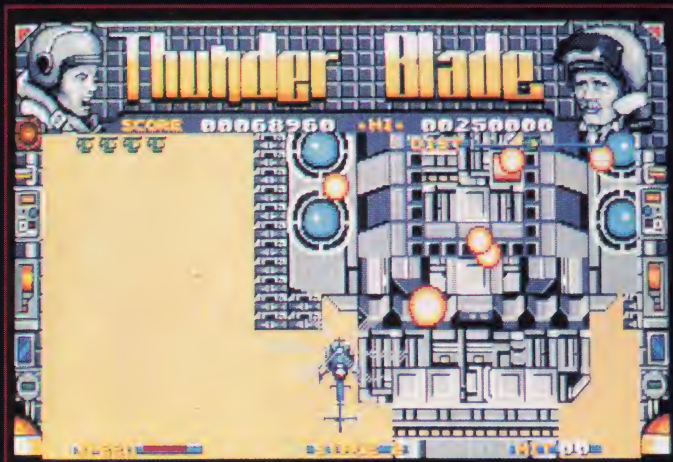
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STA
Rating
78%

GRAPHICS: 81%
SOUND: 67%

LASTING APPEAL: 77%
ADDICTIVENESS: 75%

DIFFICULTY: HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 20116



You control the helicopter from two perspectives, above and from behind. From above its pure shoot-em up action, from the rear its more like an aircraft simulation.



Yomping up the vertically-scrolling terrain in the sequel to SNK's Ikari Warriors.



"Pixelised War-mongering is the favourite past-time of hundreds of arcade gamers. Will Victory Road survive the battles?"

VICTORY ROAD

IMAGINE (£19.95)

Controlling the Ramboesque characters from Elite's Ikari Warriors, Victory Road adds another to the ever-increasing pile of 'yomp'em-ups'. Clad only in camouflage trousers and head band, and armed to your back teeth with bullets and grenades, your mission is to fight your way through the Victory Road of the title, killing the devilish inhabitants that surge to attack you. There is no apparent reason why you have to march up the vertically-scrolling screen, leaving a trail of devastation in your wake, but that's never stopped you before has it! As in the forerunner, the odds can be faced on your own or simultaneously with a friend - the latter aiding progress immensely.

Before you storm your way up the road, you must first pass a warming-up stage. This goes by the rather over-the-top

title of 'The Stairway to Heaven.' Appearing on a dais at the bottom of the screen, our butch bunch of pixels is confronted by a huge stone face. Pressing fire now, will spark your flamethrower into action, sending a blaze of scorching fire upscreen. Eventually, regardless of how much lead or napalm you pump into it, this rock-like obstacle disappears of its own accord, and your problems really begin. Tiny, green creatures amble towards you, and contact with these is lethal, costing not only a life, but your flamethrower as well. Several waves of these tiny killers pass, before you catch sight of the infamous road. The backdrop now changes from the maze of bridges and walkways of the 'Stairway', to one of the Victory Road's desert, giving our hero more room to manoeuvre, and the nasties more niches to appear from. To even the odds between you and the blood-sucking masses, there are additions you can add to your armoury. Enhancements, such as body-armour, lance-like guns and extra flamethrowers can be collected, allowing

Although SNK's Ikari Warriors was a relative success in the arcades, judging by this conversion, it's no wonder the sequel wasn't! It plays at a snail's pace, with sluggish controls and dreary action killing an otherwise average game. Graphics and sound are also disappointing, with no 'rat-ta-tat-tat' tune accompanying play. I really can't see how this conversion failed, especially as the original Ikari survived the transition so well. Still, these style games have been done to death anyway, so it's no great loss!

SM

Victory Road, or Ikari Warriors Revisited, is a strange and uneasy combination of a space environment (described as the celestial section) leading to Egyptian tombs and into the real world, of a typical jungle/combat terrain. The author of the scenario seems as baffled as everyone else as he attempts a weak explanation. From its hackneyed appearance to its predictable game-play, this game is dated with a capital 'D'. But try and ignore the hotchpotch, the substandard graphical presentation and predictable game-play, and Victory Road will leave you reminiscing about your eight-bit days and asking the question: We haven't come very far, have we?

JS

you to cut a path through the attack waves with relative ease - but be careful not to rest on your laurels when you are armed to the teeth, as contact with the enemy still costs you everything.

Having blasted your way through innumerable nasties and destroyed countless buildings, you will encounter a floating mirror. Entering this gives access to a sub-level, which is inhabited by a gross monster and its minions, both of whom must be annihilated before you can go back up to the surface. Gunfire has absolutely no effect on this gargantuan mutant, so you must lob dozens of grenades at it. Eventually it will burst into flames, leaving just its minions to kill, and, when you have wiped those out, another mirror will appear, allowing you to return to the main action up top.

STA

STA
Rating

44%

GRAPHICS: 41%
SOUND: 38%

LASTING APPEAL: 38%
ADDICTIVENESS: 46%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: 18050



--- STA 46 STA ---

CAPTAIN FIZZ

MEETS THE BLASTER-TRONS



CAPTAIN FIZZ Meets The Blaster-Trons The message is simple: co-operate or die!

It's double fun and double trouble all the way in *Captain Fizz*, the most exciting simultaneous two-player game you and a friend are ever likely to play. It's a whole new world of split-screen, high-speed action, as **both** of you take on the nasty Blaster-Trons infesting the planet Icarus.

Yup, it's a tough mission alright, but you might just be able to do it if between you you've got the right blend of co-operation, courage, laser-hot reflexes, tactical sense... and brains. The action is fast and furious in *Captain Fizz*, but if you can't work out the right tactics you'll both be dead meat.

There are 22 levels of savage and relentless action to battle through before you reach your objective, the central computer that's causing the evil infestation. You'll never get there, though, unless you put your heads together and co-operate; your buddy can't do it on his own, and neither can you. This is one program where even the easy games are hard. So remember — united you stand, but divided you fall...

Warning: this game is impossible to beat on your own.

Two joysticks required for two-player game
Screen Shots are from the Atari ST. Version

ATARI ST./AMIGA — £14.95



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PSYGNOSIS

"In the future, what will be the venue for the first Pan-galactic Olympics? Rome, Madrid, Los Angeles... Huddersfield? No, according to Infogrames, the arena will be set within the foreboding rings of Saturn."

PURPLE SATURN DAY

INFOGRAMES (£19.95)

It's Purple Saturn Day, folks! And, as usual, the proceedings are presided over 'by the great god Exxos' - which just happens to be the name of Infogrames's latest software label. Infogrames provide an official participants' pamphlet which guides you through the ceremony and benediction to Exxos, as read by the 'Purple Saturn Day President's bio-editor' - confusing isn't it! However, I ascertain from eight pages of drivel that there is an inaugural ritual and ceremony for Exxos which must take place before the games commence. The president says things like: 'Dear friends, let us be one voice and heap thanks on Exxos!' And the congregation must answer: 'ATA ATA HOGLO HULU - HAM TOT ZOGLO HULU HULU - ER TOT ZAGLO HULU HULU' - I think Infogrames have finally flipped! The president goes on to describe the events which will take place in this year's competition. Each event has been randomly (sic) 'selectorized' by the great one, and

include Ring Pursuit, Time Jump, Tronic Slider and Brain Bowler.

Before the games commence, an option and selection screen enables you to

study the opposition. Eight alien contingents participate in the games and two characters from each team compete against each other in an elimination contest, leading to the final. The winner wins the favours, and more, of the Purple Day Saturn Queen.

Each event is displayed in windows above the winner's podium and you can select to practise, or enter into the competition by clicking on the games' emblem. The first event is called Ring Pursuit and, as its title suggests, this is a race through the asteroids and gas which encircle the planet. From a cockpit-view and with mouse controls, you race against one of the alien contingents on a slalom course which

winds its way through the asteroids. Wrecked spacecraft have been placed as markers for the course and to score, you must get ahead of your opponent and weave through the slalom pressing the left and right mouse buttons to steer, and by scooting the mouse

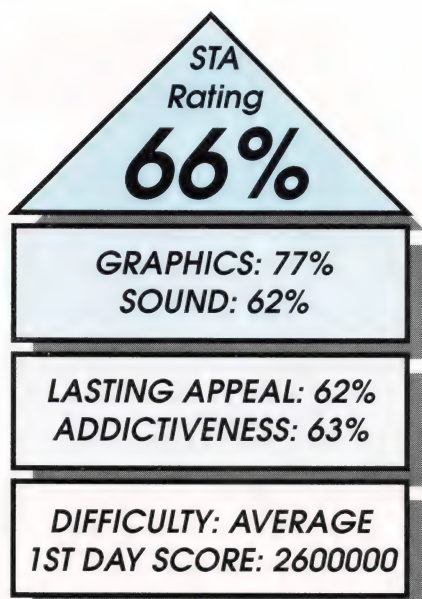
Yet again, congratulations are due to Infogrames for coming up with another hybrid game. I was not impressed by the self-indulgent scenario, which was obviously enjoyed by the authors and will be understood by nobody else. But that is my only complaint about this game. The artwork is magnificent and, uniquely, the highly original game-play is actually playable as well. Artistically, I particularly like Ring Pursuit and the three dimensionality of the asteroids is breathtaking. But the real show-stopper is Brain Stormer, which is similar in concept to Lankhor's ingenious Elementals.

JS

Although 'Saturn' is one of Infogrames' prettiest games, it suffers from repetitive gameplay. The 3D graphics move stunningly fast, without a hint of jerkiness, and it's just a pity the events aren't a little more inspiring. There are only four different things to do and, when you have been travelling the same circuit for about five minutes with nothing exciting happening, the initial excitement wears off. Infogrames are one of the few innovative companies left, and, for the most part, their games are enjoyable to look at and play. Sadly, 'Saturn' is a temporary setback, but I'm sure they will bounce back with something a lot better.

SM





back and forth to make the craft accelerate forwards and backwards. If, however, the computer-controlled opponent overtakes you, your score accumulation ceases and you must manoeuvre the craft out of the ring, speed along in 'clear space' and dive back in the course when you have passed your opponent. You can monitor your position in conjunction with the alien craft on a radar display.

For the next event, entitled Tronic

Slider, a special pitch has been constructed in outer space, and piloting your hover scooter, the aim of this game is to blast energy balls which move around the pitch and collect the fragments. As soon as you vacuum up the fragments, the ball reforms and speeds off across the pitch. You can set alien relations back a millennium by crashing into your opponent's scooter and vacuuming up the fragments which are shaken off through the force of the collision.

The next event, Brain Bowler, is designed to test your cerebral fitness and this 'revolutionary' game is as difficult to explain as it is to understand. Both competitors are seated within the walls of a massive brain, which is set out like a circuit board. The brain has been split into two territories and both you and your opponent control an electro-ball which can be aimed and fired at various parts of the brain. The ball rebounds off its target and returns to its original position and you must stimulate and re-activate your side of the brain by activating electrical charges

It never ceases to amaze me how the French manage to create such original games. Purple Saturn Day is an odd game - it could be easily mistaken for Capt. Blood II. The pretty graphics and sound, however, is where the comparison between the two stops. Purple Saturn Day is a complicated arcade game with a large dose of strategy thrown in for good measure. Exxos have produced an interesting game which, when played properly, is highly enjoyable.

NC

which travel through the circuitry. First, you must aim the ball at switches to open the circuits and release the current, and then you can take the charge from one of the four condensers. The electro-ball absorbs the energy and returns, enabling you to finish the sequence by firing at one of eighteen chips which must all be activated to finish the game.

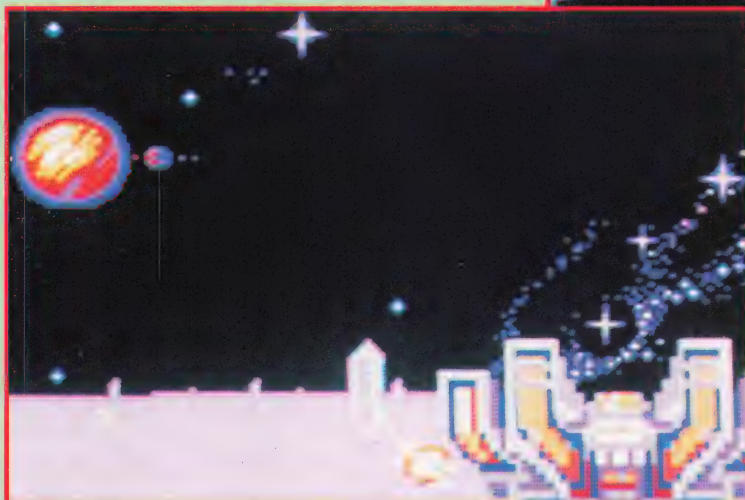
The final contest, entitled Time Jump, is certainly more straightforward than the last brain-teaser. Fragments of energy pass over and you must capture and absorb the stars by aiming and firing with the mouse. This energy fuels a 'Gravity Catapult' and clicking the mouse button winds it up and sends the craft whizzing across the universe. The more energy you absorb, the further you travel, or as the participants' pamphlet puts it: 'You will plunge through mind-altering visions of space-time contraction, a vertiginous spectacle of theoretical vacuum intrinsically extrapolational'. This is a prime example of how irrelevant and useless the scenario is to the game. **STA**



In the Tronic Slider event we see the energy ball, aim carefully and the ball will explode.



Speed is now of the essence as unless they are collected quickly, your opponent will steal the point-yielding segments.



"Ocean are certainly getting some mileage out of old Stallone, and with tongue firmly in cheek, they present Rambo III - the sequel of the sequel!"

RAMBO III

OCEAN (£19.95)

Yes, he's back! The one-man army who has inflicted more havoc and mayhem on various enemies than both Attila the Hun and Gengis Khan put together. During the course of three films Rambo's warmongering achievements have gone from barely feasible to completely ridiculous. Miraculously, however, ol'Sly has got away with it! But a cinema ticket is but a fraction of the cost of a computer game. The question is, therefore, are computer-game players as gullible as movie-goers?

As usual, you assume the guise of war veteran John J. Rambo and, on this occasion, your daunting mission takes you to Afghanistan. Your old army chum, Colonel Trautman, has been captured and tortured by those good-for-nothing Ruskies. Your task is to infiltrate the enemy fort where the colonel is being held, you must locate and rescue him, and then make good your escape. If this game doesn't set East-West relations back a decade then nothing will. Stage one of the assault - the third seemingly impossible mission commences!

When we join Rambo, he has already

infiltrated the base and the joystick assumes immediate control over our hero. This section of the game is played from an overhead perspective, similar to Pandora's excellent Eagles Nest, and you must manoeuvre Rambo around the base in search of both weaponry and other useful items, which will help you complete the task. At first, armed only with a mere commando knife and a bow without arrows,

Rambo is soon surrounded by enemy guards. Pressing the firebutton stabs the nearest enemy and the victim does a dainty pirouette before disappearing. Pressing the spacebar reveals an inventory which enables you to select the weapon or item you wish to use. The guards in other areas of the base are only alerted of your presence if you use loud explosives or an unsilenced gun and so it is advisable to utilize the silence of the dagger and bow and arrow for as long as possible. But it is not

long before the entire camp is aroused.

If Rambo sets off an alarm, you are immediately surrounded by dozens of guards who run around and fire sporadically. But, a well aimed explosive arrow can knock out the control system switch on the

Rambo III was an unbelievable film, and, going by this, I expected the game to be pure destructive escapism. Sadly, the game plays at a sedate rate, offering very little excitement from its three levels. Of all the levels, the first one - an Eagles Nest clone - is the worst: a tiny figure representing Stallone teeters around, slitting peoples throats without anyone noticing and collecting objects. The following two scenes offer a modicum of enjoyment, but as you have to play the first stage to reach them, I feel they will remain unseen. A disappointing game that will sell on its name alone.

SM

Sequels of films are rarely as entertaining as the original, but we have come to expect great improvements in follow-ups to games. Sadly, this is not the case in Rambo III! I have fought in just about every campaign since the original eight-version of Commando and so I was looking forward to the so-called different game-play perspectives in Rambo III. But I can only describe these 'improvements' as uninspiring. The controls and scrolling are adequate, although the general presentation of the game looks rushed. The game-play attains the very basic criteria set by the Commando-style game, but the ranks are full and new recruits must prove themselves as a legitimate addition to this prolific genre.

JS

wall which renders the alarm system inactive. Each hit weakens Rambo's resolve, and a picture of our hero's face monitors the deterioration of his physical status, as lumps of flesh drop off until it reveals a skull - it's enough to make Sly reach for the anti-wrinkle cream. During the search for the colonel, you must also release other prisoners by busting open the cell doors. On locating the Colonel, you must leave the fort and fight your way across the compound to a waiting helicopter.

By now, all of Afghanistan is aware of the escape and you are confronted by an entire task force as you race for the border. To complete the final section of the game, you must locate and capture an enemy tank and the game is now viewed from the turret. Armed with machine guns and anti-tank missiles, the enemy step up their attack and the evil Commander makes his entrance in a helicopter. Pressing the firebutton activates the tank's cannon, but excessive use causes the gun to overheat which renders it inoperative. While you wait for the gun to cool, the enemy continue their barrage of fire and so defeat is inevitable.

STA



Film-to-computer game conversions rarely work, and Rambo III is another to add to the existing stockpile.

STA
Rating

52%

GRAPHICS: 55%
SOUND: 63%

LASTING APPEAL: 41%
ADDICTIVENESS: 44%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A

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3 - What newspaper does Clark Kent work for?

- a) Washington Post
- b) New York Tribune
- c) Daily Planet

4 - What is the name of the city that Clark Kent works in?

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Congratulations Psygnosis, Baal is magnificent! A brilliant mixture of fine artwork, taxing strategy and all-out arcade action, this game will really put you on the edge of your seat. However, its labyrinthian layout means that it is a complex pattern game in which you must learn by your mistakes, and so patience is not so much a virtue as a necessity. Considering Baal is such a successful formula, it is difficult to understand how Psygnosis failed in the past - let's hope they keep it up!

JS

In the past, Psygnosis were always praised for their ingenuity and outstanding art work, but the game-play and entertainment value was noticeably lacking. So they attempted to rectify this by combining all three elements in a game called Obliterator. A year on, and Baal has many

"If Baal is anything to go by, archeology is certainly not a vocation for the weak hearted, and you'll certainly need more than a trowel and bucket to carry out this excavation."

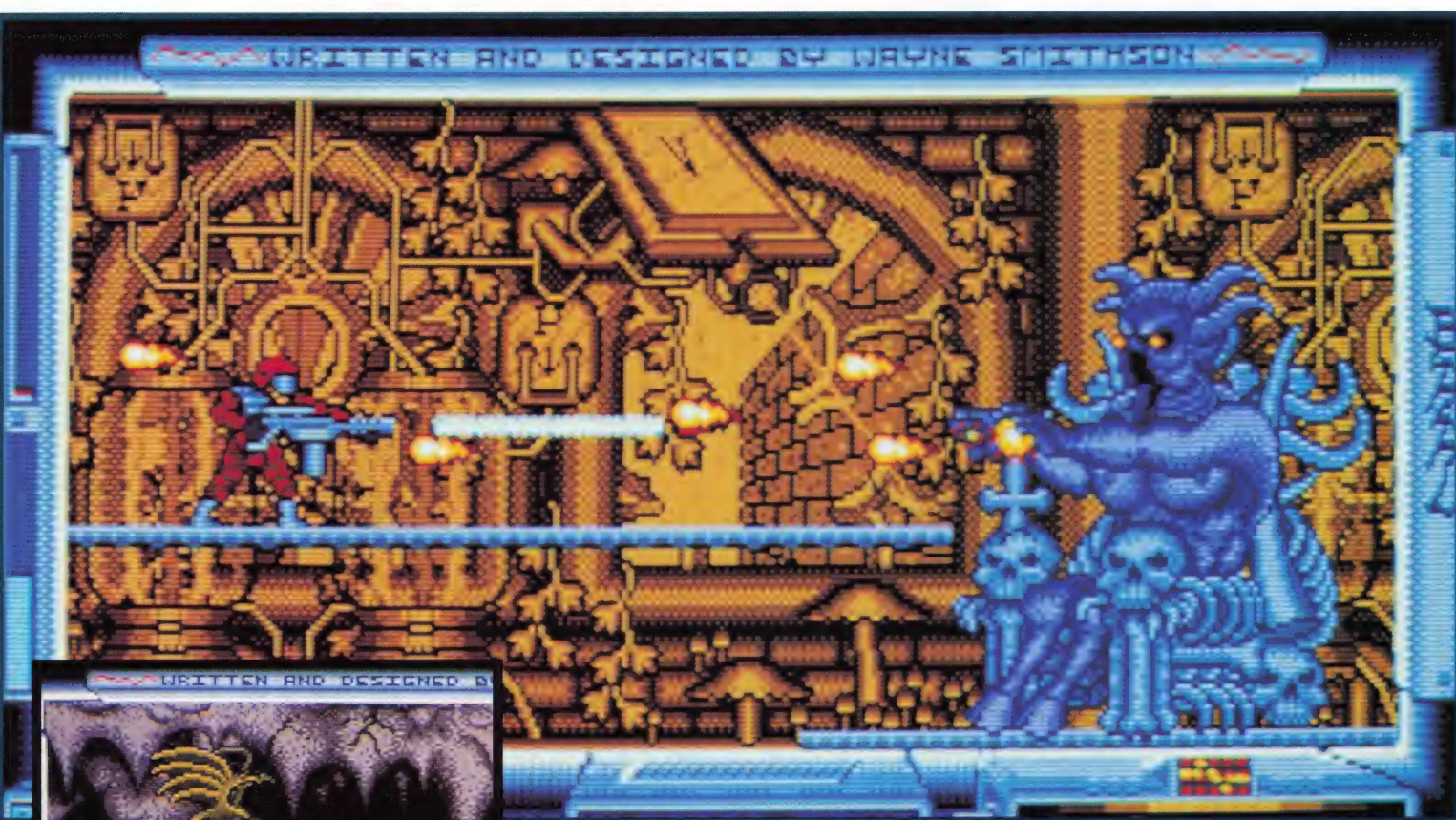
BAAL

PSYCLAPSE (£19.95)

describes the site as dark and cavernous, with thousands upon thousands of grotesquely twisted human remains: 'As if they had seen hell on Earth and had died a hideous death in the process!' The concept of heaven is of a celestial spiritual world, whereas hell is described as being contained in the fiery pits of the Earth and so it seems more physical - this is a game of nightmares!

Deep within the bowels of the planet, a

cave. The joystick assumes immediate control over him. A quick wrench to the right sends him trotting along a platform to the first ladder, and pulling back makes him climb down. Suddenly, a double-headed serpent emerges from a pool of slime and spits globules of foul liquid. Each drop of the foul jelly diminishes your excavator's immunity system and so you must make a swift decision - return to the safety of the higher platform or fight it out



date has been set for the destruction of all mankind and your task is to locate and destroy the one who means to carry out this global destruction - Baal! Your archeologist is well equipped for this particular excavation, dressed in full body-armour and carrying a rather large, laser rocket-launcher, he stands at the entrance of the

with the serpent. Moving to the higher level, jumping a gap in the floor and returning to the lower floor, places you behind the beast and, for the first time, your laser speaks with a whoosh of sound and a flash of fire. Pressing the firebutton sends a volley of laser blasts thudding into the serpent's heads. Death is swift and

Congratulations must go to Psyclapse/Psygnosis for finally managing to combine their distinctive, attractive graphics with playability - the only thing they lacked before. Baal is an excellent platform romp in the classic mould, with both a long-term task and the addictivity to keep you at it. The game is extremely well polished; the sound and graphics are of a very high standard, and the handy save game feature means that you don't have to keep running through the same levels. What with the brilliant Menace last month, and now the totally different, but also good, Baal, Psyclapse look set to be a label to watch out for. I look forward to their next release.

SM

similarities to Obliterator, except that the space environment has been replaced by the evil Baal's lair, which lies deep within the bowels of the Earth. The scenario



dramatic as the evil spirit within the beast takes flight, (with more than a passing resemblance to the death sequence in Psygnosis's Barbarian).

The laser will need replenishing often, although the cartridges are protected by impenetrable force-fields. Also, you must find rocket fuel for transportation later on in the mission. The force-fields can be de-activated by blasting control points which are, in turn, protected by Baal's beasts. The caverns are a labyrinth of ladders and platforms and so the majority of the game is spent working out a safe route around the monsters, although many lives are wasted in the process. Hazards other than bestial guardians

include dozens of mines which lay inconspicuously on the platforms. Of course,

stepping on a mine is fatal and so tapping the firebutton whilst simultaneously flicking the joystick up and to the left, sends your archeologist-turned-dragon-slayer somersaulting over gaps, mines and beasts.

On finding a so-called 'electrolite dispensor', you can replenish your laser power by moving near and pressing the 'R' key. Each of the weaponry cartridges contains greater laser power and the success of the mission relies on disabling the force-field and collect-

ing the ammo. Each monster is dedicated to thwart your progress and each is more foul than the last. Some are beasts of the ground, others are fat and hideously ugly reptiles which seem to defy gravity and hover menacingly above, spitting their venom with great accuracy. But your laser is not directable and so you often have to lure the flying monster to a position where you can climb up a ladder or platform and blast it at eye level.

In the deepest extremity of the caverns, a 're-integrator' or transporter waits to take you to the next section of the game. A jet pack is fitted to your adventurer's back, and pushing the joystick up and to the right, sends him flying across to the next cavern. Countless monsters and traps stand between you and your inevitable confrontation with Baal. Each trap is more foxing than the last and each monster more gruesome and powerful. Baal's underworld is split into three domains; the first two are mere thresholds leading to the evil one's lair.

STA

Another multi-directional scrolling platform game, what's the big deal?

Whilst Baal won't win any prizes for being a highly original game, it does manage to combine great graphics and sound with good gameplay to form one of the more enjoyable games of its kind. The macabre backdrops help give added atmosphere to the game as you steer your Time Warrior through the labyrinth in search of the demonic Baal. One of the most welcome features which puts Baal one step ahead of the competition is the save game feature, a very handy routine!

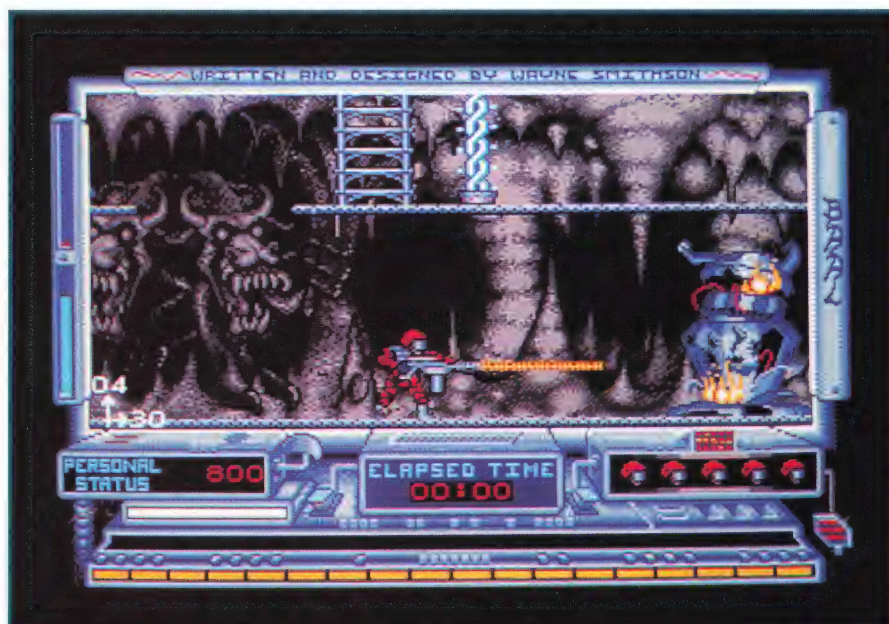
NC

STA
Rating
69%

GRAPHICS: 71%
SOUND: 53%

LASTING APPEAL: 66%
ADDICTIVENESS: 71%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: 6233



Combining the incredible graphics of their older releases and with the playability of the recent Menace, Baal proves to be Psygnosis/Psyclapse's best yet.

"Air traffic control, in an international airport, must be the most demanding and stressful occupation in the world. Microprose cordially invite you to see whether you can prevent mid-air disasters without having a nervous breakdown."

You hold the lives of thousands of passengers and crew members in your hands and your task in this air traffic control simulation is to monitor a constantly changing situation, monitor flight paths, and direct departures and arrivals. Learning that the air traffic travelling within your jurisdiction is entirely your responsibility and that flight crews of all nationalities are relying on your ability to guide them is a sobering realization. This game attempts the mammoth task of simulating this frenetic environment. There are five levels of difficulty, which progressively introduce more problems for the controller to contend with and allow less margin for error. Air traffic becomes progressively heavier and you must guide the aircraft around adverse weather conditions and mountainous terrain. Also, poor visibility creates further difficulties and in latter levels there are restricted areas and fuel emergencies.

You are presented with an option-screen where you can choose to watch a demonstration scenario which is designed to show you how the game is played - it all looks rather confusing. Once you have selected the level of skill, you are informed of your meagre salary rate and presented with a selection of airports with vacancies for trainees. You could choose Atlanta, Dallas Fortworth, Denver or Washington, although you are always offered the unpopular graveyard shift. But before your first stint, you must log-on with a control tower access code from the accompanying manual. The screen reveals a visual display of your control area map, which is a single, integrated screen showing graphical representation of the airport and surrounding area. Microprose have dispensed

Oscar; Bravo; Charlie; Tango; you are now clear to land.



KENNEDY APPROACH

MICROPROSE (£24.95)

Kennedy Approach is a rather uninspiring insight into what must be a most hectic environment. The unimpressive and dull graphical presentation and inaudible, muffled speech synthesis made me yearn for one of Microprose's more exciting presentations. If this is what air traffic control is like then somnolence is probably more widespread than nervous breakdowns.

JS

with the more conventional technology, such as sweep radars, and so we must assume that this is more invention than realistic and faithful simulation.

As described, the screen shows the airport, the surrounding area and the aircraft travelling on various flightpaths. A grid of dots on the screen denotes air traffic lanes, which routinely enter and leave your area. On the approach side of the airport, there is a VHF Omni Range tower, from which the aircraft receive their headings directions and 'hold circle' around, while they queue up for landing. The identity, type and origin of each aircraft in your area is displayed on the status display at the top of the screen, and there are three classes of aircraft which are represented by the icons on screen. These include light planes, jet airliners and the Concorde.

Each aircraft travels in one of the eight compass directions, and beneath the aircraft icon, there are bars which repre-

sent thousands of feet and indicate the current altitude. Your communication with the various aircrews is relayed via a so-called Command Line and it is your task to maintain communication with every aircraft and to issue heading commands. Pressing the button momentarily changes the aircraft icon into an arrow, which can be turned in any compass direction.

Additionally, pushing the joystick back and forth alters the altitude. A rather muffled speech synthesis relays messages and commands to the flight crew and they reply

'Roger' to confirm that they understand. Your aim is to maintain a constant and smooth cycle of landings and take-offs by issuing the correct commands at the right time, altering headings and altitudes and avoiding flight delays, near misses and, of course, collisions. Your success is reflected in your salary increment or reduction at the end of each stint.

STA

After enjoying Kennedy Approach on my 64, I was expecting big things of the ST version. Unfortunately, Microprose haven't added any enhancements to what should have been the ultimate version, and have simply converted the 8-bit version over. The speech is unintelligible and the graphics basic to say the least - both of which make the game boring to look at and play. A missed opportunity by Microprose to bring the game up to the standard of past hits, such as Gunship and F-15.

SM

STA
Rating
55%

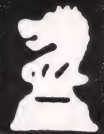
GRAPHICS: 52%
SOUND: 50%

LASTING APPEAL: 58%
ADDICTIVENESS: 51%

DIFFICULTY: AVE/HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A



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Yet another so-called 'hotly-awaited' arcade conversion! Arcade licences vary in price, depending on the success of the game, and *Soldier of Light* didn't exactly set the arcade ablaze. But with Jetpac-style blasting and pleasing controls, the game is worth a look. But be warned, the level of difficulty has been set very high - equivalent to penny-pinching arcade level. *Soldier of Light* is an ideal arcade game, as it keeps you occupied for ten minutes, defeats you, and leaves you wanting to play the game another time. But it lacks depth, variety and purpose, and so I question a long-term commitment.

JS

Converted from Taito's relatively obscure coin-op, *Soldier of Light* is an eight-way scrolling shoot'em-up spanning three invaded planets. Obviously, for the sake of these planets, the oppressors must be evicted, and this is where you come in, controlling Xain, a hardened space mercenary. As the planet's present dwellers aren't too happy about the prospect of leaving and are likely to retaliate, Xain is equipped in his mission with an exoskeletal suit of armour, a pair of jet-boots which allows him to leap huge distances with ease and a laser gun for which enhancements can be collected as he progresses.

Before the game begins, you are able to choose which of the three planets you want to begin on. Lagto is a tropical planet and home to giant dinosaurs, Xain-eating plants and sticky bogs; Cleedos is a barren desert where the only sign of life lurks within a multi-level city somewhere in the wastes; and Cleehalt is a dark, volcanic landscape, hiding a technically advanced city. Each planet has roughly the same difficulty level and time-limit, and, having chosen his destination, Xain is briefed and beamed down.

Xain is initially positioned at the left of the screen, but can run from left to right with his jet-boots coming into action by pushing the joystick up and holding it there, depending on the length of jump

STA
Rating

58%

GRAPHICS: 50%
SOUND: 43%

LASTING APPEAL: 63%
ADDICTIVENESS: 62%

DIFFICULTY: HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 9700

"Collecting extra weapons whilst simultaneously killing wave after wave of horrible creatures, is very unoriginal. Can Ace show the same panache, as seen in 'Alien Syndrome', to raise this from the doldrums?"

SOLDIER OF LIGHT

ACE (£19.95)



Midway through Lagto, the Jungle planet, Xain encounters a hugh water-bound Dinosaur.

After seeing Ace's conversion of Alien Syndrome, I had high hopes for this. Initial impressions are good, with some pretty, if a little dark, graphics and some nice aliens - in particular, the water-dwelling dinosaur. However, although the presentation is fine, the game itself is horrendously difficult: swarms of bullet-firing men come at you, along with their airborne division and half of the planet's wildlife, and there is no way that you can see them off with your puny laser. Just to add insult to injury, as if the main part of the game were not hard enough, the space section is totally impossible! Granted, as there are only three stages the game had to be fairly hard - but not impossible! Soldier of Light could have been a good game, but the game's extreme difficulty makes it just not worthwhile.

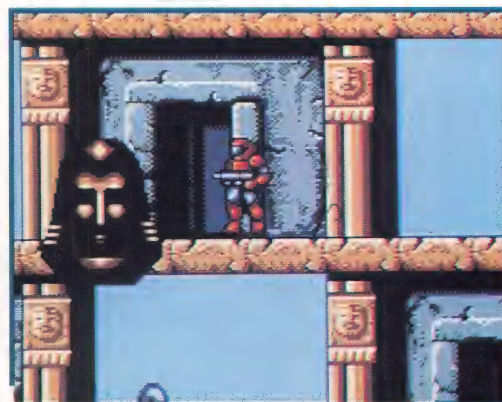
SM

required. After a while, the enemy locate Xain and promptly begin to attack him. Every time a baddy or their bullets hit Xain, his suit's resistance gets weaker until its energy bar reaches zero, costing him one of his five lives. As mentioned earlier, Xain isn't unarmed. He carries a laser-gun which is a fairly good weapon and despatches the hordes with relative ease. But for the harder-to-kill aliens you meet towards the end of the planet, you will need to find one of the randomly-appearing pods which give Xain a new, higher-potency weapon.

When Xain has fought his way to the end of the planet, his ship will beam him back aboard and he will make his way to the next planet. The game now turns into a typical horizontal-scroller, involving turning

wave after wave of space ships into debris, and after you have managed that, you beam down to the next planet to repeat the carnage.

STA



20000 LEAGUES

— COKTEL VISION (£19.95) —

After the dismal attempt by Players to recreate Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days* on the ST, another of his novels steps up to place its neck on the chopping block.

If you aren't familiar with the story then allow me to enlighten you: a great sea-monster has been wreaking

havoc and terrorising ships. As Mr. Aronnax, a renowned professor, you have joined an expedition in an attempt to find it. However, as you reach Queen Charlotte's Island, a mysterious glow appears next to your ship. Fearing it may be monster you and your two colleagues stare in horror as it starts to

destroy your boat. You awake to find yourself in the interior of a futuristic submersible, and in the company of an enigmatic figure who introduces himself as Captain Nemo. Evading your questions as to whether you are prisoners or not, Nemo informs you that you are in the lounge of his ship, the Nautilus, and that he is going to take you places that no-one has seen before.

The actual game now begins with you within the lounge. Obviously you wish to escape, and this is achieved by utilising the various objects scattered around the Nautilus. The actual submarine consists of three

rooms: the lounge, where a compass, your notepad, a map and some diving gear can be found; the engine room where valuable information of your unknown route can be found; and a library, where Nemo's vast selection can reveal valuable information. The game is icon-driven, and if you want to use something, the pointer must be positioned on the object and the button clicked. A fair amount of strategy is required to appease the moody Captain, so you must be polite at all times when addressing him. The escape itself, can only be put into operation when you have plotted the correct route, by marking points on the map. When you feel the time is right, you must don the diving gear, equip yourself with a weapon, and escape.

20000 Leagues is a definite improvement upon 80 Days, and, although perplexing at first, should offer the more patient amongst you weeks of enjoyment. The graphics are crisp, although a little drab, and the sound is suitably atmospheric. A novel little game, which, beneath its unimpressive exterior, offers good value for money.

STA



STA
Rating
50%

GRAPHICS: 38%
SOUND: 30%

LASTING APPEAL: 61%
ADDICTIVENESS: 45%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A

HELL BENT

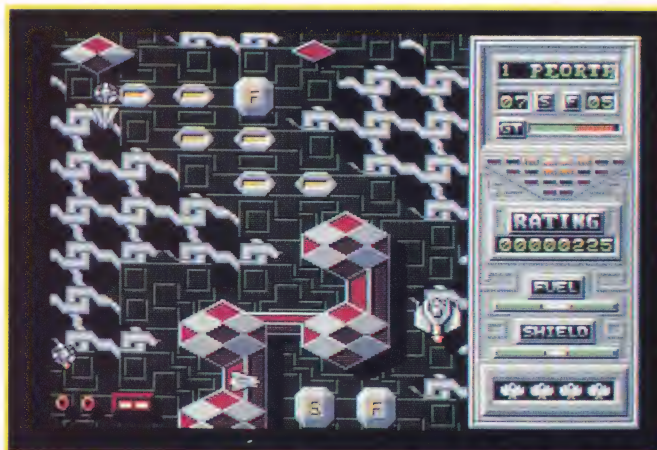
— NOVAGEN (£19.95) —

Novagen's new programming talent, the flamboyant-sounding Donovan Prince, is an unusual contrast to their reclusive and retiring resident programmer, Paul Woakes. While Woakes puts the finishing touches to his masterpiece, *Damoclese*, Prince's premier presentation is intended to keep us occupied. Novagen, of course, are famous for a certain style of game, but does 'Prince' have the skill to extend their currently limited repertoire?

A first encounter with *Hell Bent* reveals what looks like a very typical vertically-scrolling shoot'em-up. However, the nature of its game-play is quite different. You can enter straight into the game with the minimum of fuss (always a bonus in shoot'em-ups), and an assault craft emerges from the doors of a silo and drifts forward across the landscape

unaided. But before you take control of the craft, you must prepare yourself for a shock! Game control in shoot'em-ups is often criticized for being unresponsive, but somehow, Prince has managed to make the controls hypersensitive in *Hell Bent* and the very slightest joystick movement can radically change the speed or direction of the craft.

Initial encounters with this game end abruptly as you plant your craft in the nearest immovable objective. It is at these early faltering stages that you realise that *Hell Bent*'s game-play differs from the majority of shoot'em-ups. This game requires ridiculously slight and precise movements to steer the craft safely through obstacles, and any lapse in concentration is fatal. Your objective is to blast as many objects as possible and con-



tinuously replenish fuel and weaponry levels by absorbing fuel and shield pods, which are marked by the letters 'F' and 'S'. A gauge diminishes as you blast obstacles, and when you have caused sufficient destruction, you can return to the silo to begin the next level.

Hell Bent will try your patience to the limit! The hypersensitive controls and tight space is an infuriating combination and you will either play it until you master it, or end up biting chunks

out of the box and throwing darts at a poster of Donovan Prince.

STA

STA
Rating
52%

GRAPHICS: 53%
SOUND: 25%

LASTING APPEAL: 51%
ADDICTIVENESS: 54%

DIFFICULTY: HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 21000

Graphically, this game is a delight (if you ignore the stripes) but the game-play is tiresomely easy.



GALACTIC CONQUEROR

TITUS (£19.95)

"Fortunately, for certain software developers, the Cosmic Ocean appears to contain a limitless supply of alien cannon-fodder, who seem quite content to fly into the path of our gunsights."

From the people who brought you striped roads and bouncy cars in Crazy Cars, striped water and bouncy boats in Off Shore Warrior and striped wasteland in Fire and Forget, comes striped space in Galactic Conqueror. It appears that Titus have achieved smooth scrolling with stripes, and they're sticking with it. On this occasion, the action takes place in space.

Having gained hands-on experience with super cars, speed-boats and tanks from the aforementioned games, you get to pilot a super space-craft - now there's variety for you!

You are presented with a galactic map which shows various planets and stars, and using the joystick you can select the area where you want to concentrate your assault. A press of the firebutton confirms your selection and reveals a picture of the chosen planet. The manual briefly describes the characteristics of the planet, but the main difference between each

On first loading Galactic Conqueror, I was impressed by the presentation - the star charts, big mothership etc.. But when I actually started playing, I couldn't believe it when all I had to do was stay in the same place, continuously firing. Various waves of pretty space ships scrolled smoothly towards me, only to be shot by my unmoving craft - ridiculous! I cannot believe that Titus play-tested this, it is just so bad! I can honestly say, hand on heart, that this is the worst game I have ever had the misfortune to play since arriving at STA. Buy it, just so that you can have a laugh.

SM

Cosmetically, this is an attractive game with Titus's stripes creating the effect of fast and smooth scrolling as usual. But remember, this is a game in which you can conquer the stars by keeping your finger on the firebutton and shutting your eyes, which makes this an excellent game for incurable insomniacs. It looks like it's back to the stripy drawing-board for Titus!

JS

celestial body is... yes, you guessed, different coloured stripes! The game-screen shows a rear view of your craft, (Afterburner-style) and the joystick assumes directional control as you commence your stripy journey. The action seems to take place on the hemisphere of the planet and it is not long before you sight the first faction of the alien community. These craft appear as small dots and take form as they get nearer. Pressing the firebutton activates your limitless weaponry - a double-barrelled laser cannon.

In addition to the obligatory alien marauders, meteorites and mines swirl up from the planet towards you and before long you are fighting for airspace. As described, your adversaries are many, but alien culling is simple in this game when you discover continuous laser fire: simply keep your finger on the firebutton and shut your eyes while your score accumulates into millions. Other planet surfaces have rocket launchers and pylons, but they cause little concern.

STA

STA
Rating
24%

GRAPHICS: 43%
SOUND: 38%

LASTING APPEAL: 13%
ADDICTIVENESS: 22%

DIFFICULTY: EASY
1ST DAY SCORE: 17M



--- STA 60 STA ---

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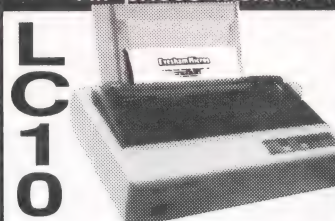
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Looks very impressive, and as a 'taster' to the possibilities of the Talespin system, it should achieve the objective of attracting attention to that product. Strip away the covering of the unusual artwork and there is nothing inside this game. It's a wonderful demo for Talespin, but I wouldn't buy an advert.

AM

With the hindrance of your leering assistant, you prepare to search Domino's Castle where you hope to find some clue to the whereabouts of the mystical grail. The grail will only reveal itself to the pure-hearted, so do try to resist the impulse to blast anything that gives you more than a side-ways glance. The castle inhabitants have been blighted by Mutant Fever which turns faces green and pock-marked. With luck, your assistant will catch it and improve his looks considerably!

The game is completely icon driven and it works by pointing at any character to make them produce a speech bubble similar to that in a comic book. In some of these speech bubbles, the character asks you to decide which action he should take next. Again using the mouse, you may highlight the option you want and the action then takes that path. The vast majority of the decisions are nothing more exciting than the simple question of what direction you should take next. If you play the game to win, you will naturally pick every goody-goody option and be home in bed with the grail before your cocoa gets cold.

The game is shown as a series of still pictures which are loaded from disk as the story unfolds - just as if you were turning the pages of a comic book. This is a computerised version of a simple, fighting fantasy book. There is no animation, but occasionally the action is enlivened

"A pure-hearted wizard has set off to find the Grail, but he needs all the help he can get."

THE GRAIL

MICRODEAL (£19.95)



Help you? - Not likely, oh mutant fever carrier!

I think the most succinct comment I can make to describe this game is: 'too easy'. It only took me one evening to complete and I had little difficulty in solving the few problems presented. On the plus side, I liked the graphics and the sound wasn't too bad. I also quite enjoyed the joke or two that it contained. All in all I would have to use a well-known response from Master Mind: "PASS". Definitely not for an adventurer of any experience.

SK

with bursts of digitised sound effects. The graphics range from the impressive to the grotesque. Tortured, Van Gogh landscapes form the backdrop to the weird, and sometimes yucky, foreground characters. The results of your spell blasting can turn a 'bootiful', Bernard Mathews - turkey monster into a blood-sodden lump of offal which jars with the comic book text. This ghastly sight leaves you wondering at the possible market for the game.

This game has been produced as a showcase for the Talespin Adventure System which created it. For this reason it looks impressive, but does not contain the depth required for a commercial game. There are virtually no puzzles to solve or objects to manipulate, and the text is so heavily loaded with hints, that you would need to be suffering from Mutant Fever not to solve it.

STA

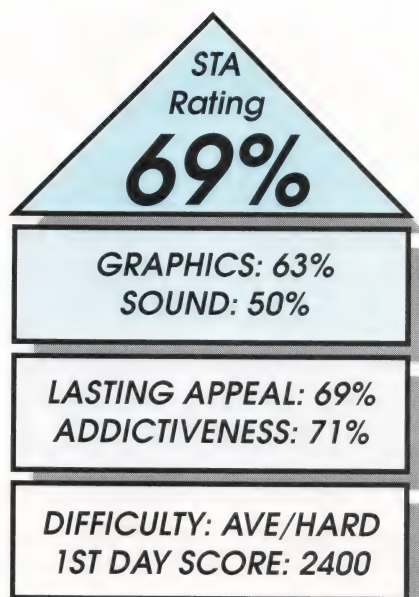


**STA
Rating**

48%

**TEXT/GRAPHICS: 71%
GAMEPLAY: 45%**

**LASTING APPEAL: 54%
ADDICTIVENESS: 30%**



Originally released by Infogrames under the forgettable name, Chamonix Challenge, Epyx have taken the original game and made it more playable.

The game begins with a wealth of option screens, asking you to choose one of six, increasingly difficult mountains; what you want to take in your rucksack; the time you wish to leave; and the climate. Of these, the most important is taking the right things for your climb. A good selection of food, warm clothing and climbing gear must be taken to combat the various problems your character will encounter whilst climbing - represented by a humorous, suffering face, to the right of the mountain.

The climb itself is split into three separate parts: crossing a glacier and both rock and ice climbing. Traversing the ice is probably the easiest part of the game, requiring simple decathlonesque joystick waggling, and the occasional prod of the fire button to test the ice's firmness. Don't be lulled into a false sense of security by this stage, though, because the actual climbing can seem to be as hard as the real thing. The process of climbing is quite simple, and follows a routine of digging in your axes, getting a good foot hold and then pulling yourself up. It can be made simpler, though, if you have packed your crampons (spiky soles for better grip), this process can then be done in double-quick time - you did pack them didn't you? And whatever you do, don't hang around for too long as you will lose your grip and slide down the mountain's face.

With its only adequate graphics and sound, Final Assault would seem to have nothing to offer the games player. Only when you sit down and persevere with it will you find its true playability. The game is extremely user-friendly, with all the options available easily accessible, and, true to life, if you do anything wrong, you will tumble to your death.

Not the best game this month, and not the 'peak' of Epyx's career, but good all the same.

SM

Do the words carabiners, piton and chock mean anything to you? Did you think that a gaiter was something Paul Hogan made films about? If so then prepare to be initiated by Epyx's mountain-climbing game, Final Assault.

FINAL ASSAULT

US GOLD/EPYX (£19.95)

Originally available from Infogrames, Final Assault has been re-packaged, renamed, revamped and re-released by Epyx. Although the game is a direct descendant of Chaminoix Challenge, I must say it has been greatly enhanced. The game's graphics and sound certainly won't win it any awards, but whatever the game lacks in presentation, it definitely makes up for with its playability. How refreshing, too, it is to see a game with such a diverse theme. Final Assault is one of those games in which you feel as though you are actually competing. The relief and satisfaction of reaching a summit is unsurmountable! (Ouch! Sorry, Ed.)

NC

When you pass the ice surfaces, you will eventually reach the rock. Here the climber must use both his hands and feet to hold and pull himself up, so soft shoes and chalk (for a better grip) are essential. Each limb flashes yellow, and by moving that hand or leg, you must attempt to shunt your way up.

Eventually, I managed to crawl my way to the top of what seemed like the Eiger, but was only a hillock compared to the others, and was greeted by a celebratory screen and my name on a mythical newspaper's headline. But if you fail... well, keep trying. Even Sir Edmund Hilary needed a couple of year's practice before conquering Everest.

STA



Carabiners, Jummars and Crampons? - All you budding Chris Bonningtons should have fun!

"ARMED TERRORISTS HAVE STORMED SECRET
CONFERENCE OF WORLD LEADERS - STOP - MANY
LEADERS REPORTED INJURED - STOP - THE PRESIDENT
OF THE USA IS MISSING - STOP"

THE PRESIDENT IS MISSING

COSMI (£24.95)

It is now four days since the disappearance of the President. The Department of Defence has acted quickly and created the post of Special Investigator, with unrestricted access to the department's computer system. This computer is also networked into the Federal Data Banks and Security systems. Special satellite com-

The communication with the agents is not believable enough. I had no feeling that any action was going on behind the scenes; rather that a diskful of grey data was waiting to be shuffled up the screen. If you fancy playing 'Smiley the Mole Hunter' amid the buff folders of the Ministry, you may enjoy it, but you will need to be a lover of deep-thought games to get your money's worth. Novel, and perhaps if you persevere, worth it.

AM

munications have been set up to provide links to government intelligence organizations whose agents await your instructions to seek out and report on any subject or suspect.

And now it's up to you. Before you is the computer terminal containing all the

dossiers and reports that have so far been assembled. The President's time is running out. You must pore over the facts, and from them tease out the probable culprits. Only by setting the agents onto likely leads, and awaiting the reports, can you hope to work out the location of the missing head of state.

Not for you the thrill of the chase, or the danger of the actual investigation. Your job is to sit like the spider in the centre of the web and control the operation.

The game is accompanied by a very atmospheric audio cassette containing news reports, snatches of telephone conversations and intercepted radio messages. Your computer has access to digitised photographs of both the scenes around the atrocity and the faces of terrorist suspects. There are endless pages of information on the backgrounds of all the major characters in this drama, plus State

Department files on terrorist groups. In fact, the data goes on and on. Can you plough through the information and find the elusive facts that will link all the seemingly unconnected events together?

Passing instructions to the faceless agents at the other ends of the world is a pretty simplistic affair. If your instructions

Somebody, or bodies, have spent a lot of time and effort over this game. The accompanying cassette is very well done and sets the scene beautifully. I like this game. It's for the experienced adventurer who isn't scared of spending a long time reading masses of reports and studying pictures in order to glean relevant information to help complete the game. I would put this game in the difficult category, especially as I seem to have lost my access code for the classified data.

SK



RAGOUL, S
ASSASSIN

Height: 6
Weight: 1
Birth: D
Hama, Syr

Facial and body scars. Co foreign operations unit of Syrian guerilla force. In assassination squad under command of Amal, head of service. Ragoul joined them and served in Lebanon during intervention, 1988-81. At Saika 1982. Sent to the 1 training centre, Karlovi

are understood, the agent will go unavailable for a time before returning with a report. Reports may be in code which makes your life very difficult.

The documentation states that if you give the name of unknown characters to the agents, they will reply with an error message. I managed to pass out the names of the ST Action editorial staff to be investigated, without a murmur of complaint. This means that either I am misunderstanding the rules, or my suspicions regarding that lot upstairs are correct!

STA



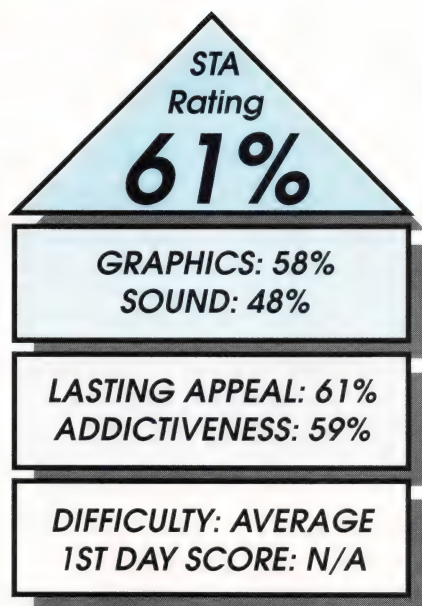
Looks like Big Ron has got himself into a bit of bother.....NANCEEEEEEEEEYYYYYYYY!!!!

STA
Rating

68%

TEXT/GRAPHICS: 71%
GAMEPLAY: 60%

LASTING APPEAL: 73%
ADDICTIVENESS: 68%



Earth is a dying planet, and people are flocking to colonize new galaxies. However, to make sure the future populations are only of the highest calibre, only those who can prove their intelligence are allowed to go. Beginning the game, you are asked to type in your name and choose from one of six weird-looking aliens. Having chosen from this strange group, the action switches to outside the rocket's launching pad. TP, the host of the original Trivial Pursuit, is waiting there and, after you have pressed fire, he will ask you a general knowledge question. On pressing fire, the answer will be revealed and if you have got it right, TP will allow you to enter the door leading to the rocket, when a short animation sequence follows, showing the ship taking off.

The screen's view now changes so that you are now looking out of the rocket's cockpit. In front of you is a galaxy consisting of about a dozen planets. Each planetary system specializes in a particular trivia subject: art and literature, entertainment, geography, history, sport and leisure, and science and nature; and you must transmat to each planet, answering questions until you locate and retrieve an object relating to the given subject. Teleporting down to the planet is achieved by moving the cursor to the required destination and pressing fire. The planet's surface, whether it is a hall or a barren landscape, is now shown, with the question master standing on the left-hand side. Answer his question correctly, and you will be transported back to your ship, and the

This one's for smart asses everywhere! If, like me, you can answer every question in Trivial Pursuit when it's not your turn and none when it is, then this unusual interpretation of the most popular game in the world will be right up your street. An interplanetary quiz is a great idea and the presentation is colourful and amusing. Add to this, quick, no-fuss game-play, thousands of questions on all subjects, and you can see that this game is an absolute must.

JS

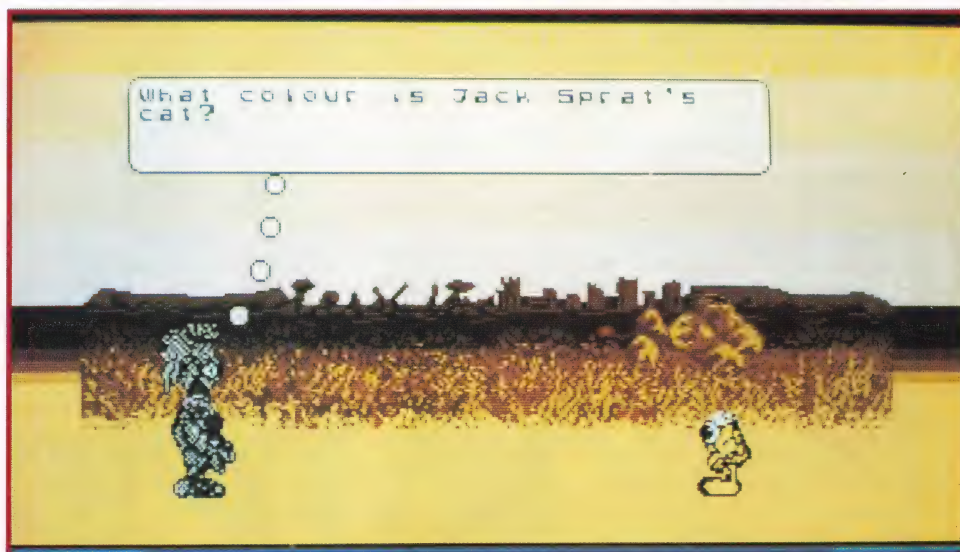
"Horn Abbots' board game, Trivial Pursuit, made the coffee table an integral part of the furniture once more. Can Domark emulate their previous success with this 'different' sequel?"

TRIVIAL II

DOMARK (£19.95)

As in the original Trivial Pursuit, 'A New Beginning' is a lot better when played with a group of mates. The space scenario is a nice idea for breathing new life into an old licence but, apart from the more varied aesthetics, nothing has really been changed, and if you own the original Domark conversion, you won't be able to spot a lot of game-play differences, making it a dubious buy. However, if you don't have the original version, take a look, because, as far as entertainment value goes, you will have to go a long way to beat this.

SM



planet will disintegrate. Get it wrong, and the planet will remain there until you do get it right.

When all six of the objects have been retrieved, you are allowed to travel to the planet Genus II - a planet belonging to an extremely highbrow race. Here you will face the steely gazes of six, bearded ques-

tion masters. Any one of these can be chosen to offer you a question, and when you have answered two or three correctly, the screen will change to a sunset view of Genus II, with the victor standing below his congratulatory message.

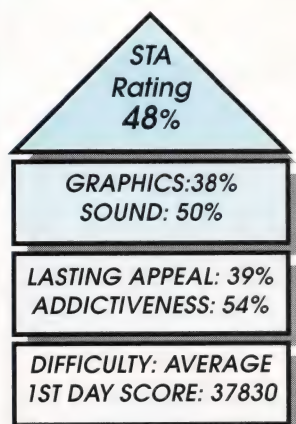
STA



If Steve can answer the elders 'ace' question correctly, he can become an inhabitant of the planet Genus.

Wow, this takes me back! Maniax, although having the typically pretentious software-company scenario, is an up-to-date version of that old classic, Qix. Apparently, all of the major cities in the western hemisphere have been smothered in a thick fog, and it is up to you to clear it before the whole world comes to a standstill. Why you? Well, you are Maniax, inter-galactic fog clearer extraordinaire, and only your unique abilities can help Earth.

Controlling the dot that represents Maniax, you must recolour the screen by separating parts of it from the fog,



MANIAX

ANCO (£19.95)

thus revealing a digitised picture of a famous landmark. The line that trails in your wake must never be doubled back on and, most importantly, must never be touched by the scaly monsters that inhabit the fog. Oops! You weren't told about those were you? Well, soon after the fog enveloped these cities, horrible creatures took residence and wouldn't leave. Anyway, if these things touch you before you reach another line, the trail you have left will retract, killing you in the process. Not all the odds are stacked against you though, as floating through the smog are several useful features, such as extra lives, level skips and bombs. The latter can be placed around the screen and, after a while, will explode, killing everything within their vicinity. Letters also float around the screen, spelling the name of the capital you are trying to save and, when collected in the correct order, give you a points bonus.

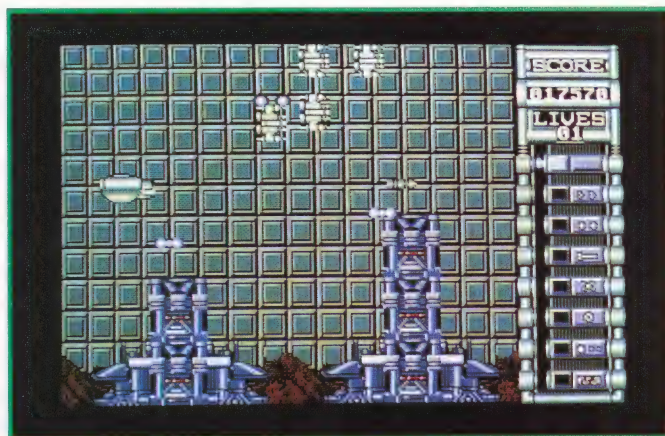
Although for the most part these floating icons aid Maniax, some hinder his progress. These take the form of triangles and can cost Maniax points, slow him down or, worst of all, kill him. A level is complete when Maniax has recovered 75% of a screen. The monsters will then freeze and the next screen will appear.

Although suffering from unresponsive and finicky con-

trols, Maniax is a fun little blast-from-the-past - for a while, anyway. The action can get quite hectic at times, with the monsters following quirky, random patterns and hitting your line when you least expect it. Graphics and sound have been brought as up-to-date as possible, but in the cold light of dawn, Maniax just cannot cut it against more recent offerings like Operation Wolf, Thunderblade and R-Type.

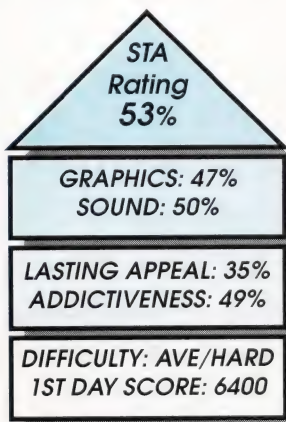
A brave risk by Anco to recreate the early days of computing, but one that will sadly fail.

STA



According to Arcana, No Excuses is a devious test of mental ability and reflexes devised by a crack-pot Russian professor. It is, actually, a shoot'em-up with lateral thinking overtones. Played on an isometric board, the basic aim is to shoot all the alien inhabitants of a level and collect a golden key so you can progress to the next level.

The game begins with your crab-like robot positioned in a corner. It is also here we find one of the first problems - the control method. Instead of a more conventional way of detecting its movement, the crab is



NO EXCUSES

ARCANA (£19.95)

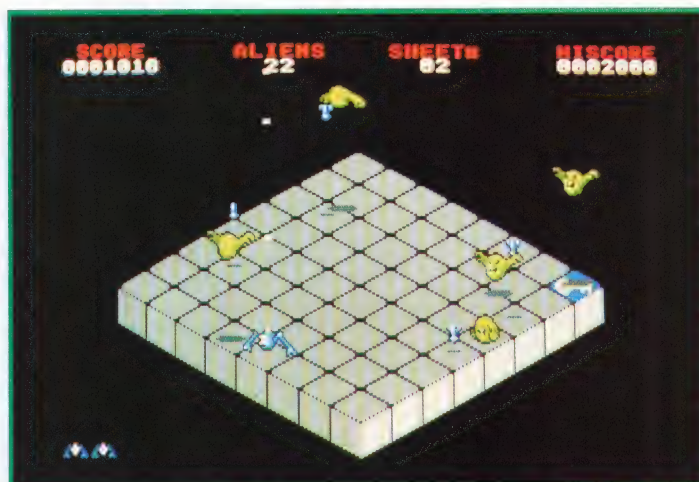
moved by a rotation method consisting of a turn, move, turn, move system - difficult in some of the tight scrapes you encounter in the game. Apart from this design fault, the crab is armed with a laser gun which fires up, down and in front of it, and this must be used to kill the nasty green aliens. These appear from the top of the screen in groups of six or seven, and when one is shot it is replaced by another until the alien supply is exhausted, at which point you collect the key and are warped to the next level. The nasties follow set patterns across the board, getting lower each time, and should they manage to touch you, your craft will disintegrate and a life will be lost. To protect you from this horrible fate, you are armed with a limited supply of shields, and by pressing fire, these

glass domes cover your crab, protecting it for a short time. Later levels feature extra problems in the form of different blocks. There are 'jelly' blocks, which disintegrate when walked on; the exceedingly nasty reverse control blocks which cost me a life nearly every time I trod on

one; and, thankfully, glowing blocks which turn your controls back to normal.

I found No Excuses to be good fun for a while, but after completing a few levels, the lack of variation caused the game to drag, and boredom quickly set in. If there was a bit more to do it would be fine, but shooting the aliens drags on and the weak perspective makes even this difficult. A below average game, and a disappointing one from the makers of the excellent Powerplay.

STA



COMPETITION WINNERS

DOMARK/ SPITTING IMAGE COMPETITION

The winner of the Spitting Image competition is Austin Hackett, from Croydon in Surrey. He goes to visit the Spitting Image Studios and attempt to win a lifesize puppet of himself.

The 20 runners-up who each win a Spitting Image book are: I Greenslade, Welling; P White, Hemel Hempstead; A Pearce, Leigh; N Gani, London SE1; N Sumner, Lymm; S Mercer, Bexley; M Green, Enfield; M Sole, North Aylesham; A Campbell, Swanley; R Symeon, Blackpool; S Tate, Weymouth; S Thomas, Harrogate; C Downs, South Shields; L Tattershall, Bury; T Manning, London W4; D Poole, Slough; M Wilson, Milton of Campsie; R G Wood, Crawley; C Barrett, Wolverhampton and P Wyett, Mitcham.

The five winners of the Spitting Image videos are: A Gillard, Bradford; N Holgate; D Taylor, Beckenham; M Bray, Nuneaton and C T Peach, BFPO 36. Finally, the two winners of Spitting Image slippers are P Critchlow, Manchester and P Bodman, Purbrook. Well done to all of you.

Here are the correct answers:

- 1. a) Clint Eastwood b) Ian Botham c) Michael Jackson d) The Pope*
- 2. b) Fluck and Law*
- 3. Roger Moore*

We had some funny answers, mostly confusing Clint Eastwood with people such as, Colin Moynihan, Rupert Murdoch, Norman Tebbit, George Bush, Lee Marvin and John Moore (?). Another favourite was Sylvester Stallone trying to look like Ian Botham.

INFOGRAMS/ WHO DARES WINS COMPETITION

The two winners who will travel to the private estate in Herefordshire to participate in a Who Dares Wins weekend are M Sadler of Bracknell and D Humphreys of Cambridge. Congratulations to you both and I hope you enjoy yourselves.

The ten runners-up who each receive a copy of Hostages or Action Service are: G Turner, Crediton; M De Pear, Throckenholt; N Warwick, Wokingham; A James, Catford; N Sumner, Lymm, D Sewell, Inverness; C Cowan, Eglinton; A Pearce, Leigh; M Burch, London W7 and A Wardell, Carmarthen.

The correct answers are:

- 1. Krypton Factor*
- 2. Special Air Service*
- 3. Who Dares Wins*

GIVING THE GAME AWAY

Tips, tips and even more tips.... I know many of you will be battling with Electric Dreams' R-Type, so, in an effort to aid your attempts in the destruction of those organic alien critters, Giving The Game Away proudly presents the definitive guide. Write in and tell me what you think of it and whether you would like to see more for other games.

Normal tips will be back in full force next month, for now, however, I will leave you with these few.



Daley's Olympic Challenge

This one's a real joystick destroyer! So, just to help a little, Mark Lawrence has discovered this handy little cheat. Whilst on the title page try typing "HINGSEN-J". (The "-" is on the numeric key pad) Now, by pressing the function keys you should be able to enter any event you want!

Cybernoid - Hewson

I think this is a brilliant game, if you agree and would like infinite lives (well, even if you don't agree and would like infinite lives), type RAISTLIN on the title screen. Thanks to Ian Baston, from Ilfracombe for that.



Afterburner

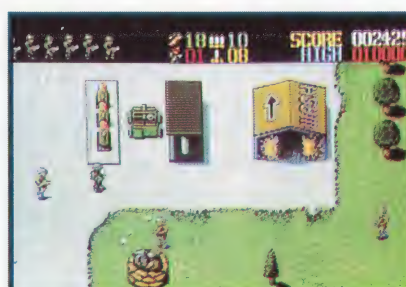
Last month Norman Winstanley sent us a level skip cheat. This month Mark Lawrence has gone one better. Start the game as normal then press "Backspace" to pause it, type in "THUNDERBLADE" and the cheat mode is accessed. Now use the following keys:

G = more missiles
T = less missiles
< = increment stage number
> = decrement stage number
N = increment lives



Fernandez Must Die

If you are having trouble killing the fascist dictator, pause the game and type SPINYNORMAN for infinite Hermans. You've got Barry Glenister from Bolton to thank for that one. All together now, thanks Barry!





Sorcery+ - Virgin

Although we printed an infinite health cheat last month, Daniel Webster, from Buckingham, has sent in this useful guide to Virgin's spell'em-up:

Chapter 1: Shooting stars kill all creatures, as do money bags. To activate these, simply line up with the creatures and press fire. Ball and chains kill eyeballs, pumpkins and hog's heads, whilst axes kill ghosts, although these can only be used successfully when you are positioned on the ghost.

Large bottles and keys open most of the doors, whilst the shield opens the door to the castle, but only exit via the furthest right door or you will be trapped.

To release the sorcerers use the following objects:

Wastelands	: Goblet of Wine
Dungeons	: Scroll
Strongroom	: Crown
Tunnel	: Magic Wand
Wine Cellar	: Golden Chalice
Outer Sanctum	: Spell Book
Stonehenge	: Emporor's Moon
Palace	: Little Lyre

Once you have freed all of the sorcerers, get a crown, go to the sanctuary and sit on the central pedestal. All the sorceres will now be restored to their powerful selves, and a time bonus will be added. Now enter the door to...

Chapter 2: Here the bow and arrow and the kite kills all creatures, whilst the garlic kills the Cyclops, the Holy Cross the Witches, and the Bird of Peace the Necromancer's servants.

Use the wooden clubs to get through earth walls and a few doors, but bottles and keys open the majority. Avoid, as much as possible, the bolt-firing creatures, but if you get hit, squat on some bubbles to restore any lost help.

You need four hearts to kill the Necromancer, so take a crown from chapter one, and this turns into your first heart. Use the pilot light, found 'Above the World', to enter Gatwick and take the disk found there. Use the disk to get the heart under the gate. Leave both of them as close to the Necromancer's lair as possible, and go and get the two easier ones which are just lying about. Surround him with all four and voila! One completed game!

PRIZES! PRIZES! PRIZES!

Thank you everybody for those, Dan Webster has got copies of Double Dragon and Heroes of the Lance on their way, thanks to Melbourne House and U.S. Gold for donating those. Likewise, Barry Glenister recieves a copy of IK+ and Ian Baston gets a copy of R-Type, thanks to Activision for those prizes.

Times of Lore - Origin

Origin's latest Ultimaesque fantasy-role-playing adventure will have many of you cursing until the early hours. So, just to help you on your way, Nick Clarkson has come up with some handy little hints.

Potions and Scrolls:

Brown scroll	: Kills all monsters on the screen
White scroll	: Freezes all monsters for a limited time
Green scroll	: Teleport - can only be used twice
White Potion	: Random energy top-up
Green Potion	: Complete energy top-up

Boots of speed may be found in Treela and a magic axe can be located at Lankwell.

Remember to save your game whenever and wherever possible. And, should you find yourself wandering the wastelands at night, try turning up your monitor or television set's brightness and contrast settings.



MEGA POKES

DRILLER...INDIANA JONES...MENACE

This month's tips are for Incentive's Driller, U.S. Gold's Indiana Jones, and Psyclapse's Menace. Both Driller and Indiana Jones use the "universal cheat routine", which many of you will already have. Simply add the relevant code to this routine to create the cheat, remembering to save the cheat before running it! The Menace cheat should be typed in and saved by itself. With all of these cheats remember to check the data carefully and follow the instructions shown in the REM statements.

DRILLER...INDIANA JONES...MENACE

THE DEFINITIVE R-TYPE PLAYING GUIDE

Level 1:

Shouldn't be too much trouble, this one; the first problem you will encounter is a beam-firing robot, but a couple of full-power beams will sort him out. Next, we approach the snake-like formation. The key here is to charge up a beam and fly in low, so that when you are in line with the blue link, release your beam, and this will cause the snake to explode in a chain reaction - be careful to watch out for any stray bullets, though. No more real problems now until the mothership. On approach, charge up a beam and, as the green head appears, let it go. Now, release your pod so that it is next to the head, and keep firing until it eventually explodes. The only weapons worth collecting in this section are the deflective lasers, homing missiles and extra speed.



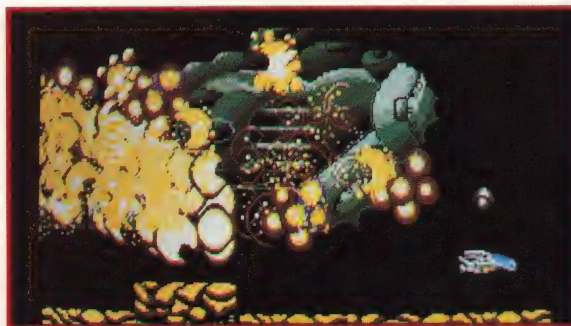
Level 2:

The main problem here are those horrible 'lizards' that sprout from the walls. Providing you have deflective lasers still, these shouldn't be too difficult - but be cautious, as they appear from everywhere. Additionally, if you still have the deflective lasers, the tiny spore-like ships shouldn't cause too much of a problem. But do be careful of the ones that home in on you. Before long, you will approach a plant that opens, spewing aliens. Just before it, though, is a yellow gem. Collect this to receive tracer lasers that hug the contours of the landscape. Keeping to the left, fire continually, and you will get every lizard and ship that comes near you. Passing the first half, the trouble really begins - in the form of a long snake. This is difficult to pass, but follow this route and you can do it every time: as it approaches you, collect the deflective laser gun and get below the snake. Shoot the red segments, thus stopping it releasing any bullets. Now go to the bottom left of the screen; then bottom right; up right; staying up, move to the left; move across to the centre of the right-hand side; move down, and you will be next to the end-of-level blobby thing. Positioning is critical here: allow your orb to touch the creature, and stay where you are. The snake will pass, allowing you to go to the top left of the screen. Position yourself so that you can shoot the eye with the deflective lasers, and stay still. The snake will appear again, but stay where you are, continually firing. It will go back into the blobby thing, allowing you to continue shooting the eye, until it eventually explodes.



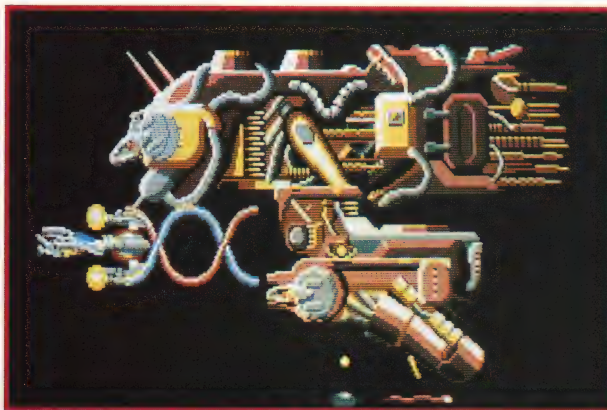
Level 3:

The big ship. As it appears, with a full-power beam, blow the rocket off the front, along with the gun turrets lurking inside. Shoot the gem-relinquishing alien, and collect the tracer laser it leaves. These are extremely useful for blowing up the surface defences of the ship so, continually firing, try to get them all. Move to the bottom of the screen, avoiding the ground, and shoot the under-carriage. Avoid it as it falls off, and shoot any remaining turrets. Move under the ship, DON'T collect the red gem, and keep firing to get any other turrets, and position yourself in the niche next to the four retro-rockets. Beam these, until they are all gone, and the ship will begin to get lower. Staying in your niche, you will be safe, but keep checking your position, making sure there is no chance of clipping its hull. When it rises again, release your pod and attach it to the rear of your ship. Move to the front of the ship, and blow the turrets off with your newly-positioned lasers. Avoiding any new aliens, release your pod so that it sinks to where the red probe appears from. It may take several attempts, and be wary, as the front-mounted turrets reappear, but when in place, keep firing for all you are worth and, voila!



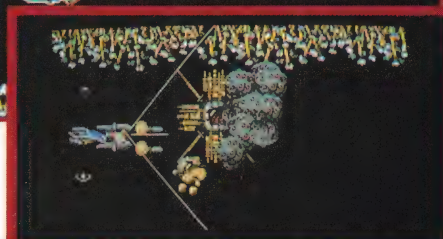
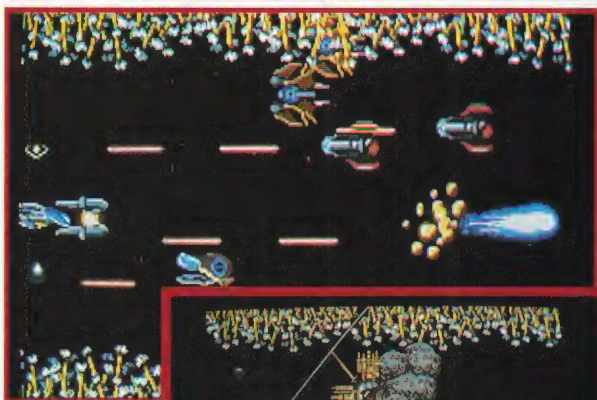
Level 4:

I really hate this level! Use your beam and pod to clear a path through the green trails, all the time shooting the aliens. Ignore the yellow gem, but do collect the speed up, a revolving satellite and the homing missiles. About halfway through, you will come face-to-face with a wall of trails. Enter it at the bottom, and collect the red gem which is about halfway through it. This will give you big hoopy lasers which cut through the things like a knife through butter. Position yourself about halfway across the screen, that way you will avoid the wave of aliens who sneakily appear from the left-hand side of the screen, then your homing missiles will sort them out. Just before you reach the end-of-level guardian, collect the blue gem, giving you the good old deflective lasers, go to the top of the screen, clearing the remainder of the trails, and prepare for the mothership that splits into three sections. Go to the right of the screen, and wait for its red lasers to appear. The red domes are the only vulnerable parts, so fly below it and shoot the one above you, destroying it. Now the other two can be taken in any order.



Level 5:

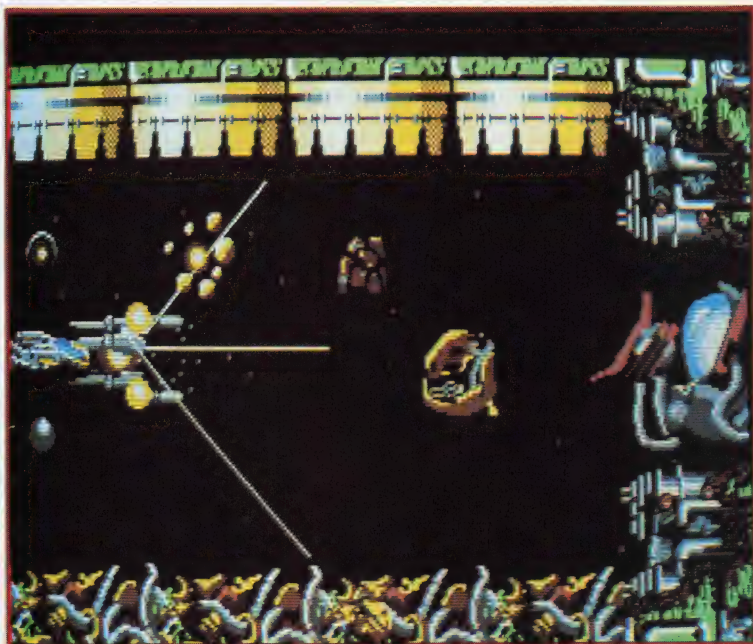
A useful tip here is that you can actually fly through the scenery without dying. Several yellow caterpillars appear, but are easily killed by shooting their heads, as some split up whilst others continue, allowing you to destroy their other segments. Try to memorize where they come from as they often sneak up behind you, catching you unawares. Continuing, ignore the yellow gem and stick with your deflective laser. Little laser-firing ships now appear, and this is as good a time as any to use the landscape as a hiding place, allowing you to laser them from a safe place! When they have passed by, move out from the scenery as the next batch of caterpillars appear and instantly head for it. After about four of them have passed or been shot, big multi-laser-firing ships appear. About now, a homing missile icon will appear, so collect this and let them do the work. Additionally, if you are feeling really cocky, you can fly between them when they appear in their twos, and kill them with your deflective lasers. A couple more easy-meat caterpillars will appear, and these are your final obstacle before the brain-covered mothership. Release your pod into it, continually firing, and some of the brains will be removed. Avoid and shoot the ones that attack you, and retrieve your pod again. Continue using this method until the metallic exterior of the ship is visible. Shooting this will then destroy it.



Level 6:

This is a maze of metal walls which have, what look like, silicon chips running along them. Your deflective lasers can see to these, but be careful to stay a quarter of the way across the screen, which will give you enough room to see any aliens coming from the rear. Also be careful of any aliens who fall from the top of the screen. Ignore the yellow gem, as the tracer lasers can't kill the big aliens because they move between the walls instead of along them. Collect the speed capsule, and prepare for the end-of-level sequence. Position yourself next to the hole in the ceiling and keep firing. About a dozen of the big yellow ships that are scattered throughout the level appear - straight in the line of your fire!



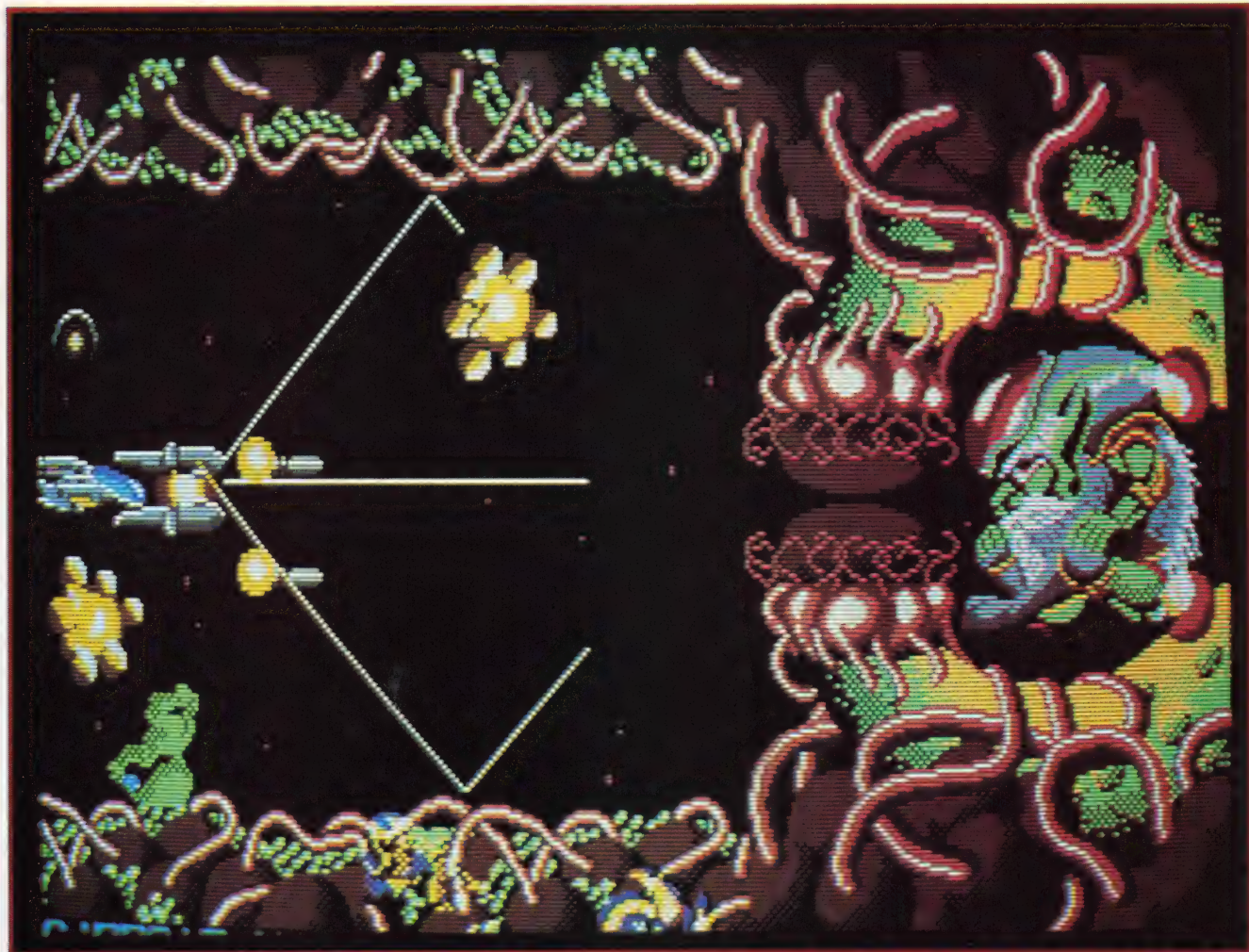


Level 7:

Attack waves similar to those of the first level appear, and are easy meat for your deflective lasers. Collect the speed capsule and, still shooting, the homing missiles. A large cigar-shaped monster appears from the left so, staying around the centre of the screen, wait for it, move down, and shoot it. A big chunk of masonry is in the centre of the screen, stay below it to kill the next attack wave, then move up to avoid a huge wave of yellow meanies. These will be caught by your deflective lasers, but be sure to move down to avoid any you missed. Try to get the missile-spewing blue robot before he cramps your manoeuvring space. Move down to pass through a small passage and collect the satellite. You now enter the end-of-level sequence - the garbage chute. Another of those beam-firing robots appears, but only requires one full beam to kill him. Now, the garbage begins to fall. Move below the second chute from the left and keep firing; that way, any falling rubbish will be shot by your deflective lasers. A battering-ram-like ship appears, so rise and shoot it until its head explodes. It will now explode and the rubbish will fall faster. Move left and right, all the time firing, to avoid any rubbish and wait for the next head to appear. With a full beam, rise and release your beam. It should now explode!

Level 8:

Although this is the final level, it isn't too hard. Lots of mutated babies attack you, but your trusty deflectives kill most of them. Collect the speed but ignore the yellow gem. Next, a silver star will appear which cannot be shot. This nuisance constantly orbits the screen, so avoid it at all costs, whilst trying to shoot the babies. Avoid the red gem and prepare to enter the final stage. A huge head sits protected behind a red, fibrous shield. Avoiding the babies that still lurk, wait for this shield to open, and let him have it with a full beam. Now, you will get the congratulatory message and Bydo will be destroyed!



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UNIVERSAL CHEAT ROUTINE FOR ST BASIC

```

10 REM *****Universal Cheat Routine*****
20 OPTION BASE 1: DIM A%(128):CHEAT=VARPTR(A%(1))
30 DEF SEG=0: REM Remove this line if new ST Basic is in use
40 X=CHEAT:READ B
50 WHILE B<>99999
60 POKE X,B:X=X+2
70 READ B
80 WEND
90 REM This code is common to all cheat routines. Type in this listing
100 REM and save it for future use. To use a cheat routine replace the
110 REM lines of code in this program with those in the new listing.
120 DATA &H601A,&H0000,&H00E4,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000
130 DATA &H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000
140 DATA &H2F3C,&H0000,&H0300,&H487A,&HFEF4,&H4267,&H3F3C,&H004A
150 DATA &H4E41,&H4FEF,&H000C,&H487A,&H0064,&H3F3C,&H0009,&H4E41
160 DATA &H5C8F,&H3F3C,&H0007,&H4E41,&H548F,&H4267,&H487A,&H004A
170 DATA &H3F3C,&H004E,&H4E41,&H41FA,&H0068,&H3018,&HC0FC,&H0006
180 DATA &HD1C0,&H487A,&H0037,&H487A,&H0033,&H2F08,&H2F3C,&H004B
190 DATA &H0003,&H4E41,&H4FF9,&H0007,&H7FF0,&H2F40,&H0004,&H2240
200 DATA &H43E9,&H0100,&H41FA,&H003A,&H3018,&H5340,&H2458,&HD5C9
210 DATA &H3498,&H51C8,&HEFF8,&H4ED1,&H2A2E,&H2A00,&H1B45,&H496E
220 DATA &H7365,&H7274,&H2067,&H616D,&H6520,&H6469,&H736B,&H2061
230 DATA &H6E64,&H2070,&H7265,&H7373,&H2061,&H206B,&H6579,&H0000
240 REM *****
250 REM The following code is game specific. These are the lines
260 REM of code that must be altered to provide cheats for
270 REM different games.

```

ST BASIC CHEAT DATA FOR INDIANA JONES

```

280 REM INFINITE LIVES FOR INDIANA JONES
300 DATA 1,0,&H0A60,&H4A72,&H6175,&H746F,&H5C67,&H616D,&H652E,&H7072,&H6700,99999
330 BSAVE "\"IJ.PRG",CHEAT,256
340 REM THE ABOVE PROGRAM MUST BE PLACED IN AN AUTO FOLDER.
350 REM TO USE,INSERT THE CHEAT DISK IN DRIVE A THEN RESET THE ATARI.
360 REM WHEN PROMPTED INSERT INDIANA JONES DISK AND PRESS A KEY

```

ST BASIC CHEAT DATA FOR DRILLER

```

280 REM INFINITE SHIELD AND ENERGY FOR DRILLER
300 DATA 6,0,&HA6F8,&H7A91,0,&HA0AA,&HB736,1,&H1FF4,&HEF36
310 DATA 1,&H227E,&H76B2,1,&H3B2A,&H2517,1,&H38A4,&HDFBD
320 DATA &H6175,&H746F,&H5C78,&H2E70,&H7267,0,99999
330 BSAVE "\"DRILLER.PRG",CHEAT,256
340 REM THE ABOVE PROGRAM MUST BE PLACED IN AN AUTO FOLDER.
350 REM TO USE,INSERT THE CHEAT DISK IN DRIVE A THEN RESET THE ATARI.
360 REM WHEN PROMPTED INSERT DRILLER DISK AND PRESS A KEY

```

ST BASIC CHEAT ROUTINE FOR MENACE

```

10 REM ***** Cheat Routine for Menace *****
20 OPTION BASE 1: DIM A%(128):CHEAT=VARPTR(A%(1))
30 DEF SEG=0: REM Remove this line if new ST Basic is in use
40 X=CHEAT:READ B
50 WHILE B<>99999
60 POKE X,B:X=X+2
70 READ B
80 WEND
90 CALL CHEAT
100 REM *****
110 DATA &H42A7,&H3F3C,&H0020,&H4E41,&H5C8F,&H7001,&H2F00,&H4267
120 DATA &H2F00,&H42A7,&H4DFA,&H0042,&H2F0E,&H3F3C,&H0008,&H4E4E
130 DATA &H41FA,&H0008,&H2D48,&H007A,&H4ED6,&H4DF9,&H0001,&H8000
140 DATA &H41FA,&H000E,&H2D48,&H00EE,&H3D7C,&H4EF9,&H00EC,&H4ED6
150 DATA &H41F9,&H0002,&HEEE0,&H317C,&H4E71,&HBC02,&H317C,&H4E71
160 DATA &HB8C6,&H4EF9,&H0001,&H80F2,99999

```


UNIVERSAL CHEAT ROUTINE FOR FAST BASIC

```
REM **** UNIVERSAL CHEAT ROUTINE FOR FAST BASIC ****
RESERVE CHEAT,256
X=CHEAT:READ B
WHILE B<>99999
  {X}&=B:X=X+2
READ B
WEND
```

REM This code is common to all cheat routines.Type in this listing
REM and save it for future use.To use a cheat routine replace the
REM lines of code in this program with those in the new listing.

```
DATA $601A,$0,$E4,$0,$0,$0,$0,$0
DATA $0,$0,$0,$0,$0,$0,$FFFF,$4FFA,$1FE
DATA $2F3C,$0,$300,$487A,$FEF4,$4267,$3F3C,$4A
DATA $4E41,$4FEF,$C,$487A,$64,$3F3C,$9,$4E41
DATA $5C8F,$3F3C,$7,$4E41,$548F,$4267,$487A,$4A
DATA $3F3C,$4E,$4E41,$41FA,$68,$3018,$C0FC,$6
DATA $D1C0,$487A,$37,$487A,$33,$2F08,$2F3C,$4B
DATA $3,$4E41,$4FF9,$7,$7FF0,$2F40,$4,$2240
DATA $43E9,$100,$41FA,$3A,$3018,$5340,$2458,$D5C9
DATA $3498,$51C8,$FFF8,$4ED1,$2A2E,$2A00,$1B45,$496E
DATA $7365,$7274,$2067,$616D,$6520,$6469,$736B,$2061
DATA $6E64,$2070,$7265,$7373,$2061,$206B,$6579,$0
```

FAST BASIC CHEAT DATA FOR INDIANA JONES

```
REM INFINITE LIVES FOR INDIANA JONES
DATA 1,0,$A60,$4A72,$6175,$746F,$5C67,$616D,$652E,$7072,$6700,99999
BSAVE "\IJ.PRG",CHEAT,256
```

REM THE ABOVE PROGRAM MUST BE PLACED IN AN AUTO FOLDER.
REM TO USE,INSERT THE CHEAT DISK IN DRIVE A AND RESET THE ATARI.
REM WHEN PROMPTED,INSERT THE GAME DISK AND PRESS A KEY.

FAST BASIC CHEAT DATA FOR DRILLER

```
REM INFINITE SHIELD AND ENERGY FOR DRILLER
DATA 6,$0,$A6F8,$7A91,$0,$A0AA,$B736,$1,$1FF4,$EF36,$1,$227E,$76B2
DATA $1,$3B2A,$2517,$1,$38A4,$DFBD,$6175,$746F,$5C78,$2E70,$7267,0,99999
BSAVE "\DRILLER.PRG",CHEAT,256
```

REM THE ABOVE PROGRAM MUST BE PLACED IN AN AUTO FOLDER.
REM TO USE,INSERT THE CHEAT DISK IN DRIVE A AND RESET THE ATARI.
REM WHEN PROMPTED,INSERT THE GAME DISK AND PRESS A KEY.

FAST BASIC CHEAT ROUTINE FOR MENACE

```
REM **** CHEAT ROUTINE FOR MENACE ****
RESERVE CHEAT,256
X=CHEAT:READ B
WHILE B<>99999
  {X}&=B:X=X+2
READ B
WEND
CALL CHEAT
```

```
DATA $42A7,$3F3C,$20,$4E41,$5C8F,$7001,$2F00,$4267,$2F00,$42A7,$4DFA,$42,$2F0E,$3F3C,$8,$4E4E
DATA $41FA,$8,$2D48,$7A,$4ED6,$4DF9,$1,$8000,$41FA,$E,$2D48,$EE,$3D7C,$4EF9,$EC,$4ED6
DATA $41F9,$2,$EE00,$317C,$4E71,$BC02,$317C,$4E71,$B8C6,$4EF9,$1,$80F2,99999
```


Dungeons and Disk Drives

Hi there! Stuck up a gum tree? Surrounded by dragons? Don't despair, write to the Dungeon and let them help. YOU may not know the answer - 'But now you know a Troll who does!'

Welcome back my son. Kind of you to drop in see us once more. Wait till I move the Dragon, I'd hate you to stand on his tail while he is sleeping. Green dragons are friendly by nature, but it's best not to push your luck! He is also a little sensitive at the moment after the treatment he received at the Atari Christmas Show. Poor Dragon, he stood beside the ST Action stand all day, and not one reader asked after his health. Next time I'll let the Troll go with him, that will make the humans show him a bit more respect.

If you had braved the cold and the crowds at the show you would have heard John Symes from Microdeal giving a short talk on Talespin, their forthcoming adventure creator. This product is released this month in opposition to the STAC adventure creator from Incentive Software. Talespin uses a completely different approach to the creation of adventures by allowing you to create a game in a picture-book format. It certainly looks interesting and we are looking forward to reviewing it as soon as we can.

At the show we met Ed Penman who was busy demonstrating his Dungeon Master Editor to an interested crowd. Only shortly afterwards did Ed find out that there are two versions of Dungeon Master around and the editor does not work on the later version. Ed has now solved this problem, so if you have trouble with your copy, contact Softex and they will give you the up-dated version. As usual the onlookers were only too eager to recount their experiences with the game and pass on hints a tips. One adventurer revealed that

his method of building-up his party was to spend long periods of time standing by a water fountain practising magic and swinging his sword. It appears that you do not need to eat while doing this and you quickly increase your powers. Personally I

I say too much, but I'll reveal as much as I dare. The first game is set in a large castle with many rooms and turrets. You will be able to lead a party of heroes around the corridors picking up various weapons, spells and treasures. There are monsters to



Mitch and the dragon traveled to the recent Atari show to find Talespin from Microdeal and Ed Penman's Dungeon Master editor

don't care much for such practises, but its up to you if you think it's worth it.

As nothing of any great interest had tumbled down the brass tube into the 'IN' tray before Christmas, I decided to drag the old crystal ball out from beneath the bed and have a peek into the future. Mirrorsoft are working on two games which look very interesting. I have been threatened with all sorts of nasty tortures if

fight, keys to turn and secret panels to open. All in graphic detail. The novel twist is that you can fight a two-player version. Your fellow human player will also have a band of heroes and he can either form an alliance with you and help search the castle, or he can scuttle off into the dark and wait around the corner to thump. The game is still a long way from being finished, but from what I saw, it looks quite exciting.

Dungeon Master - Watch your pockets! The level 8 tea leaf is about to strike



The second game involves really beautiful graphic stills. 'Proper' artists are finally being brought in to use the machine to its full potential and some of the screens being built into the game leave all previous pictures standing. The game, which I believe is called Terrarium, is set inside a 'Bottle Garden' and you, as the hero, have been shrunk by the wonders of science to a microscopic size. Down inside the bottle, the weird landscapes and creepy scenes reminded me of the 'Fantastic Voyage' movie.

Colossal Problems with Gigantic Snakes!

I am playing Colossal Adventure. What do I do when I come to the grate? I have been down there to the snake, but I can't find the chest.

Alex Stewart, High Wycombe, Bucks

My, you have done well! What do you mean, you can't find the chest? If you can't find it - who says it's there? I would suggest you concentrate on getting rid of the snake before you start worrying about imaginary chests. As we all know, (well I do anyway!) snakes are terrified of birds and although you don't mention it, you can't have failed to trip over the bird cage. Normally you could catch a bird, UNLESS you were carrying something that frightened it. I suggest you drop everything that you don't need and then catch that bird.

Why do I have the awful feeling that I'll be hearing from you again? Soon!

Mastering the Dungeon

In Dungeon Master there is a wall with two small holes in it (Level 7 I think). What is it for?

R. King, London

Lucky for you I like this game otherwise I would be climbing the walls with all the letters I am receiving about it. Most questions appear to be from myopic individuals who can't find keys. Without the use of a complicated map it's too difficult for me to explain where a particular object is. (Even if I could remember where I found them!) The mysterious holes you speak of, sound suspiciously like the source of the fire-balls which fly around the large open area on Level 7. In this area there are also a number of blue transporters which turn any object entering the field through 90 degrees. This means that the fire-balls journey around the area bashing 'ten bells' out of everything in their path. You appear to have unknowingly found and operated the wall switch that turns everything off. Be thankful for small mercies and 'leggit'!

Tied-Up for Lunch in Space Quest II

I have been caught and imprisoned by a hunter who eventually roasts and eats me.

Simon Putland, Sheffield, Yorks

And it couldn't happen to a nicer human! Sad really, I bet you were still congratulating yourself on solving the problem of the impassable ravine when he caught you. Perhaps you should talk to him, because if you persevere he will come over for a chat. As he is obviously determined to do some cooking, you might try giving him the mushrooms when he gets closer!

Wand Trouble in Kings Quest III

I can get my hands on all the ingredients I need for the spells, but I still can't get my hands on that darned magic wand! I suspect its in the locked cabinet in the wizard's study. And I suspect that the key to the cabinet may be the metallic object on top of his wardrobe. But since I can't get whatever it is off the wardrobe, I can't be sure. It's not as if I haven't written off for the Hint book - but Sierra just pocketed the money and I haven't heard anything from them.

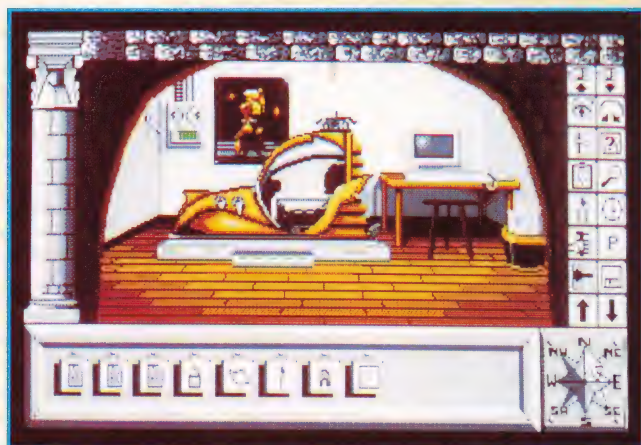
Troll as you are, show a little humanity...

Charles Butler, York

Show a little HUMANITY! If I were to show you a little humanity I would start by smashing you on the head with a broadsword - that's the sort of thing humans do! As it is, I am a peaceful Troll who would never harm a soul. Stand up the first human creep who wants to argue! And just to prove how nice I really am I'll solve your problem. This is great game, but a few of the problems are a bit shakey. The command you need is:- LOOK ON TOP OF THE CLOSET. On the subject of Sierra Hint Books - I have spoken to the British publishers, (Mediagenic), but they appear to be as bewildered as you. No they don't sell the Hint books. No they don't know why they don't. And yes they will send me some instantly. That was weeks ago and I still don't have any! It's what I always say: 'The word of a human isn't worth the paper it's written on!'

Police Quest's Missing Person

I have located 'Carol's Caffeine Castle', but I am finding it difficult to meet Steve. I have deduced that he (or she?) is in plain clothes, but although I have talked to all persons



inside, none of them will admit to being Steve. I appear to be a congenital idiot as far as this game is concerned.

R.E. Smith Esher, Surrey

I'll agree with that! When I received the radio message I simply drove there and found Steve's police car parked outside and Steve sitting inside. And he is in uniform. The trick with this game is that you must do all the actions at the right time and in the right order. I assume you did find the message to meet Steve in your pigeon hole? Perhaps you were either too early or too late for the meeting. There is no other catch.

I am in the jail trying to persuade Sweet Cheeks to help me get into the hotel's gambling den?

Martin Toomey, Westbury Wilts

The actual words I used to Sweet Cheeks were 'HELP ME AT HOTEL'. Easy really. I'd like to say that it took me until 1:30 am. to solve that question, and I hate you!

Chronoquest

In the game Chrono Quest, how do you open the fake cupboard at the top of the stairs?

R Yeatman, Whitchurch, Bristol

Well, well, you can't open the fake cupboard? I suspect that's because it's a FAKE and doesn't open.

How did you find your way to the postbox to post this letter? Hmmm. I wonder if prolonged contact with humans could rot a Troll's brain?

Light Fingered Solution to Space Quest I

We cannot kill the Sarien soldier who

is guarding the Star Generator on-board the Sarien space ship.

R Matos and N Vaz, Portugal

That's because you are not good enough thieves. You must quickly steal a grenade off the armory counter while the robot is getting your gun, and then drop it on the guard. It's not easy!

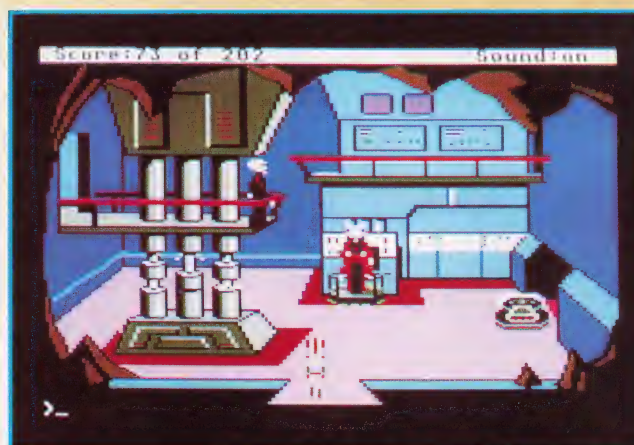
Trouble with Jinxter

I am having trouble killing the witch. I am sure that it has something to do with the crystal ball, the unicorn charm and the fan? Could the cocky humans from Issue 7 help? Note: the game is not spelt JINXSTER. It's odd that they should own a game and spell it's name wrong, so they are obviously very stupid or very absent minded.

Isaac Leung, Hampstead, London

Ahem! That's not how they spelt it, it's how I spelt it. Trolls always spell it JINXSTER. You are obviously very stupid not to know that. It's a pity really, I was looking forward to watching the terrible Ulster duo punch your nose for being rude. By way of an apology I'll tell you 'roughly' what to do. Having dropped the ash in the hearth, hide up the chimney. When the witch puts her claw up, type 'PUT BRACELET ON CLAW'. I can't explain too much as it's a little involved, but if you are still stuck send a S.A.E. (plus an apology!) to the cocky duo.

I have received a letter from Nigel Morse, who claims to know all the answers to the following Infocom adventures: The Zorks, Enchanter, Sorcerer, Spellbreaker, Wishbringer, Starcross, Suspended, Planetfall, Stationfall, Hitchhiker, Infidel, Cutthroats, Ballyhoo, Mind forever Voyaging, Trinity and Moonmist. This



clever dick is showing all the signs of a misspent youth! If you care to send a stamped addressed envelope to him at: 11, Greenleafe Av, Wheatley Hills, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN2 5RG, our Nigel promises to answer your queries. I might just redirect all my mail to him and stay in bed.

In response to my appeal for solutions to 'Hitch-Hiker' I am pleased to report that numerous readers have pitched in and supplied beautifully detailed solutions.

Special mention must be given to David Foulkes of Higher Openshaw. Also Gareth Milford-Scott of 316 Old Lodge Lane, Purley, Surrey CR2 4AQ has written to say that if you send a your H.H.G.T.T.G questions to him (with a S.A.E) he will solve all your problems. I will pass the solution along as soon as I can get out from under the latest sack of mail.

Steve, Erith and Kent from somewhere in KENT have obviously decided to take pity on a poor Troll and have sent me a beautifully detailed solution to Space Quest I. Thanks.

As a reward, I have entered all of your names in the Troll's 'Book of Honored Humans', which means you are now considered 'Honary Trolls' and may cross all Troll bridges without the need to pay toll money.

As you all seem to like a challenge who can solve my latest problem? I am receiving many letters concerning Dungeon Master which I find almost impossible to answer without the aid of some decent maps. Who considers that they have a good, clear set of DM Maps to offer?

STA

QUALSOFT

SPORTS STRATEGY

CODA

FOOTBALL MANAGEMENT GAMES THE ST DESERVES

World of Soccer. "At last, the kind of intelligent game I expected when I bought an ST". Pete Lawson, Birmingham.

"World of Soccer is my 6th ST soccer game. It's worth the other 5 put together." Brian Yates, Bolton.

"Your conception of management leaves the 'kill level' games floundering in the Gola league." SJ Carter, Portsmouth.

Head Coach V3. "It arrived two days ago. We've lost 24 hours of production already." John Watts, Watts Engineering, Coventry.

"Head Coach V3 is probably the best game I have ever bought, on any computer." Ben Weston, Knebworth.

"Head Coach is a superb and highly enjoyable game. It is certainly the best program I own." JB Wyatt, Southampton.

WORLD OF SOCCER

International management is the ultimate challenge in soccer. To build a squad of players to defeat the ball playing skills of Brazil, the fluid play of Holland, the organisation of West Germany, the counter-attacking of Italy, and the many varied styles of many others, demands an insight into the game rare amongst managers let alone fans. Do you exploit a team's weaknesses, or play to your own strengths? Do you attack down the flank with wingers, or pierce the centre with powerful midfield running? Do you play a flat back four, or use a sweeper or libero?

In "World of Soccer", players are not just attackers/defenders/midfield but goal poachers, play makers, ball winners, wingers, left, right and centre backs, sweepers (19 types of player in all). The results of matches are determined by simulated soccer matches controlled by the skills of the opposing players. Strategy is determined by the skills you build into your squad, and tactics by the particular skills you use to defeat particular teams. Substitutions and tactical moves can be made during the match to change or reinforce your plans.

For four years, through the Qualifying and Final stages of the European Championship and the World Cup, you will guide the European team of your choice. You can prepare for the competitions with friendly matches of your choosing, developing your strategy to match the in-form players at your disposal. Success is there for the taking, but it will need earning.

Choose from 33 European squads. The 4 UK home countries have 16 man squads which can be increased to 36 with players of your own. A customisation program will allow squads for any of the 33 countries to be created.

HEAD COACH v3

On the field 220lb blocks of concrete-on-legs collide, while a small man in a suit paces the touchline stroking his chin. He's the Head Coach. He has more tactical skill in his little finger than the MCC can muster in the entire club. Third down and 9, he signals to his quarterback. The quarterback takes the snap back into the pocket dummies to his star running back, wheels to the right skirting two defenders, motions to throw to his rightside wide receiver and then swings his pass back over the pack to his open Tight End. He catches and makes another five yards before being grounded. An eleven yard gain and another first down, thanks to 2 hours of rehearsal the previous Thursday afternoon. The crowd cheer the quarterback but the head coach knows that his Right Guard really deserves the credit. This is American Football, Chess with mobile human pieces.

It's your first season as a Head Coach in the NFL and you face two pre-season games. You must give as many of your 45 players a run out to see how they've come through the close season. Through these matches and the time spent at training camp you must devise your game plan to face your first NFL game. Over the next 16 games you will meet the likes of the Chicago Bears, the Washington Redskins, the Dallas Cowboys, the LA Raiders (hiss). Each game will need a new plan to exploit the weaknesses and nullify the strengths of such teams, and in the game you will probe their defense and try to stifle their offense. Success over these 16 matches will put you into the playoffs and in sight of the Superbowl. Failure will give you the best of the college draft, which will allow you to make up for the deficiencies you must by now have discovered in your side. Providing of course that the club keeps you on . . .

Let us be straight, Head coach v3 is NOT an arcade game. It's a sophisticated game based on American Football. For those who already understand something about the game, it's a chance to find out just how much they really know. For those to whom the game appeals but is something of a mystery, then Head Coach v3 is the ideal way to find out what the game is all about. In the match itself, you have a choice of 27 offensive plays and 21 defensive plays, and so you can bias your plays to suit the skills of your squad and negate those of the opposition. The training camp will give you an insight into the current performance of your players, even checking their speed in 40 yard sprints. There's only one thing that can prevent your team from eventually achieving a Superbowl place; YOU! But we warn you, this game is ADDICTIVE.

"World of Soccer" and "Head Coach v3" are only available from QUALSOFT at £17.50 and £19.95 respectively. Both games are immediately available and will be sent by return post. ACCESS orders can be taken over the phone.

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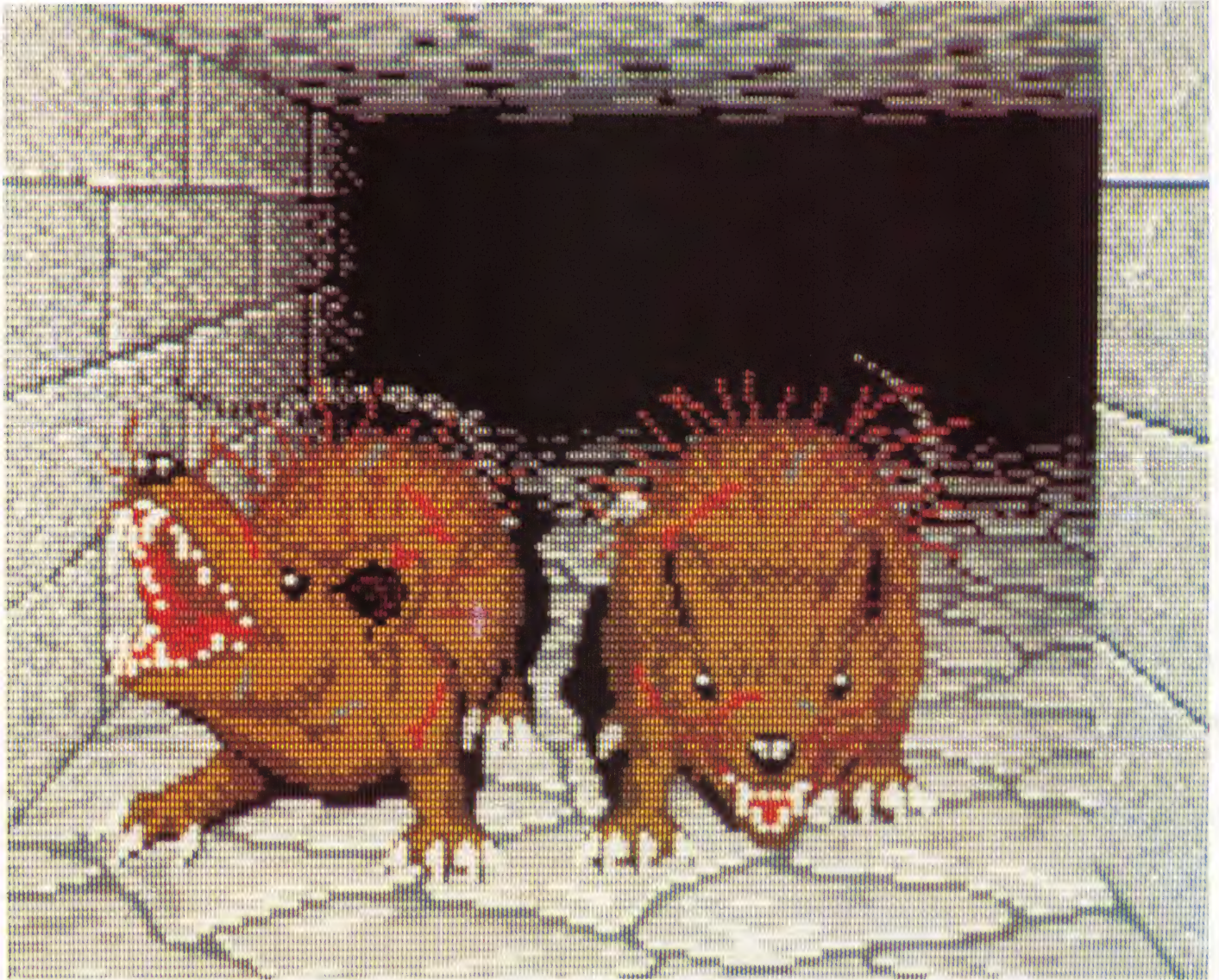
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CHAOS STRIKES BACK

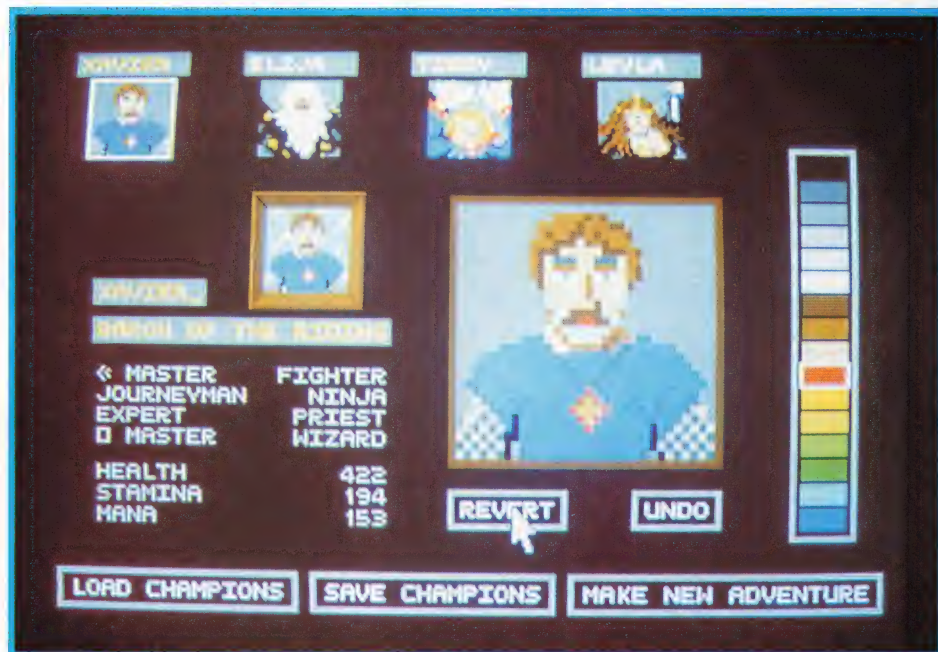


Well met, foolish one, you have arrived just in time. Don't just stand there, close the door and come closer to the fire. I trust you have had a good night's sleep, because I have news that will make you a stranger to your bed. 'Chaos has struck back!'

The Troll brought word yesterday that strange noises had been heard emanating from the old *Dungeon Master* entrance. When the Dragon and I went to investigate, we found a scroll lying just inside the door, which read: 'SO YOU THOUGHT YOU HAD DEFEATED ME? I THINK NOT. CHAOS!' It would appear that the Dark Lord has escaped from the Fire Cage and has conjured up five deeper levels to the dungeon. There is little time to lose; grab a sword, we are leaving immediately. I hope you have remembered all that you learnt in the first levels, because the vibrations in the wind tell me that we now face terrors undreamt of by mere mortals. Close the bedroom door, we will have little use for that room in the days that lie ahead. Flex your sword arm, narrow your eyes - here we go again!

Five new levels for the *Dungeon Master* game have finally arrived and they are packed full of all the 'agony and the ecstasy' you have been waiting for. In an exclusive preview, the *Dungeon Crew* had a 'hands-on' session with the add-on which is going to sweep the adventuring world by storm. We arrived so swiftly that even the Mirrorsoft Team had not had time to fully investigate the contents of the new software, but I will reveal what we have uncovered so far.

To play these levels you must already possess the original *Dungeon Master* game plus the 'Save' file containing the characters that you wish to use in the lower levels. The 'Save' file can come from any-



sold by Software Express won't work on the new data! At least it certainly wouldn't touch the file being used at the preview.

Having loaded up, your heroes will materialise before a transporter with all their former characteristics intact, but with no possessions. (No-one said this was going to be easy!) Once you step forward into that transporter haze, there is no going back. Do you like a challenge? I hope so, because these new levels are harder than

less steel jock-straps as no amount of fireballs seem to stop them.

Chests of weapons are to be found nearby and, Boy, are you going to need them! The monsters in the nearby rooms are packed in so tightly, they resemble passengers in a Japanese commuter train! The monsters which were first in evidence are those nasty, green, slimy things which fire poisonous darts. Rats, Golden Scorpions and Snatchers are also roaming in packs nearby. As you can see, this is not going to be a picnic. With our brief sojourn in the first level soon over, we passed into the transporter and materialized back in the Mirrorsoft offices.

'Chaos Strikes Back' will be on sale in January. The price has not yet been set, but expect to pay approx. £14.95. So far, no game has received 100% in an ST Action review - will this be the game which finally hits the jackpot?

Mirrorsoft have now officially announced that *Dungeon Master II* is being worked upon and it will be set in outer space. Release date is tentatively set for the autumn.

To complete our visit, Mirrorsoft presented the Dragon with a special 70-page book called the 'Secrets of *Dungeon Mastery*'. The book was written by Tracy Hickman who was the co-author of the *Dragonlance Chronicles*. Contained within its pages is the history of the dungeon and the stories which surround the many weapons and artifacts to be found in its depths. There are only a few straightforward hints given, but in their stead are cryptic rhymes and legends which can help solve some of the mysteries. The book is not available in Britain at the moment, so it is a little bit special. However, we have decided that we would like an ST ACTION reader to have it, but you are going to have to earn it! Here is what you have to do.

Before I lead the *Dungeon Crew* down into the next five levels, I need to have the four pictures of my current band redrawn. As the Troll is fond of pointing out, 'Mitch can't draw for toffee, what I want you to do is to use the 'Chaos' paintbox to produce your idea of what the *Dungeon Crew* look like. Send a 'Save' file containing your pictures of 'Mitch' (wizard), 'Troll', 'Dragon' and 'Edna' (the witch). The best entry will receive the book, and if good enough, we'll have them printed in the column.

STA

anything you have encountered so far. The first series of rooms and stairways seem to be impossible to map. There are four passageways labelled North, South, East and West, running off from a central hub. Each time these passageways are entered, their layout seems to change. It appeared to us that the rooms were rotating around the central axis, and if this is true then we are all in deep trouble. To further confuse you, there are also a number of stairways which lead to different locations each time they are climbed. All of this leaves your map looking like a plate of spaghetti bolognese. The new levels make more use of the sound effects, as you are forever hearing doors clanking in the distance. When a nearby switch is pressed, a door is heard to open, but there is none to be seen. Curiouser and curiouser! So far we have encountered no new monsters, but those we have met appear to be wearing stain-

where in the original game, but unless your characters are fully developed you will have little chance of survival. This file is loaded into the new program. From a menu, you may select any one of your party to be displayed. This will result in the small picture of your hero being shown in enlarged detail. You may be surprised to find that the picture has changed from that which you have been used to, as the drawings of several heroes have been changed slightly. From a palette of 16 colours you may now alter the picture to suit yourself using a simple 'paintbox'. Once you have redrawn your party, the editor will work upon your 'Save' game to create a new file which it will save to disk. You are now free to boot the original *Dungeon Master* game and load in the freshly created file. At this point I will reveal a fact that is going to ruin a certain someone's day. The *Dungeon Master Editor* program which is

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


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BEAT 'EM UPS

"Bruce Lee kicked his way out of the silver screen and onto eight-bit screens and launched what is arguably the most popular genre of computer entertainment. Jason Spiller traces the history of fighting games, analyses the appeal of 'kick'em-ups' and tests twelve examples available for the ST."

In the early 70's, kung fu king, Bruce Lee, exploded onto the movie scene with martial arts films, which were about as accurate as Hollywood's many attempts to simulate medieval England. But despite ham and melodramatic acting, ridiculous story lines and hilarious out-of-sync voice dubbing, these films were immensely successful - (in 1973 Warner Bros produced the first English-speaking martial arts film, 'Enter the Dragon', which grossed \$10,000,000 on its initial release). An entire generation went kung fu mad! Over a decade later, the venerable master's name was posthumously put to the first computer fighting game, which quickly smashed all previous sales records. Bruce Lee,

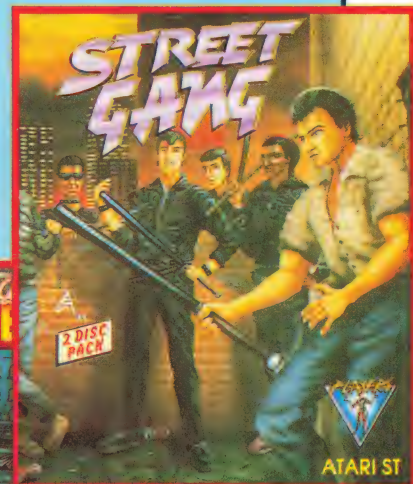
the game, was more a platform game than a fighting simulation, and in each level you had to move the master around and kick out every Chinese lantern on screen before moving onto the next level. Your adversaries, green Sumos and masked Ninjas, kept the action at a frenetic pace in this immensely enjoyable game.

Following the success of Bruce Lee, software developers responded to this popularity and numerous fighting games were released. Notable titles included, 'International Karate' and the excellent, 'Way of the Exploding Fist', which in my opinion, has yet to be equalled. 'Fist', on the Commodore 64, exploited the machine's excellent sound chip, with bone-crunching blows and yelps of pain and fury which complemented perfectly the excellent graphics and playability of the game.

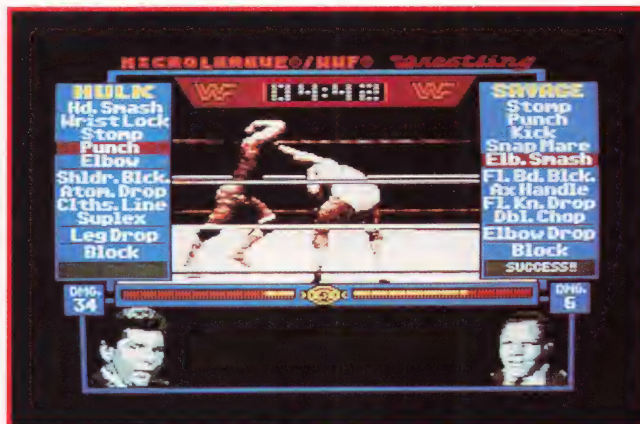
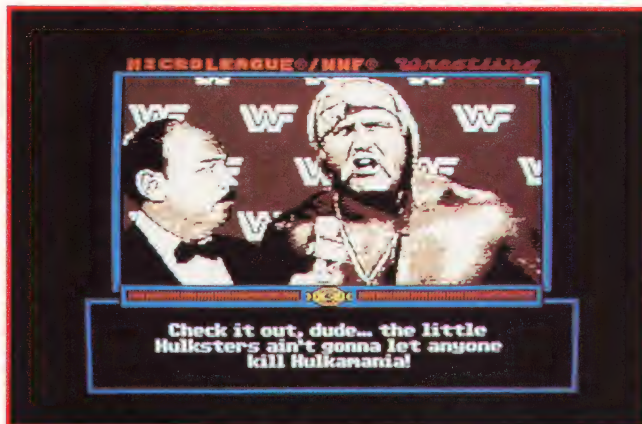
But just what is the appeal of knocking the stuffing out of these characters? Firstly, the theme is a natural candidate for computer simulation and offers the most enjoyable and competitive two-player participation, as well as intelligent computer-controlled opposition when playing solo. Additionally, the excellent joystick controls, which were originally introduced in 'Fist', as well as the eight-bit version of 'International Karate', proved to be perfect and are still used in the most recent fighting games. Pressing and releasing the firebutton and moving the joystick in any one of the eight directions could effectively achieve up to sixteen separate moves.

Not surprisingly, one of the first games to be

released on the ST was a fighting game called ST Karate - this was Bitmap Brothers, Steve Kelly and Eric Mathew's first ST project. Whilst collating games for this megatest, I was looking specifically for martial arts games and had accumulated no more than four titles. I then checked out various software lists and discovered that games could be included in this genre which are as diverse as wrestling, street fighting and broadsword battles. However, although this test covers a variety of fighting styles, each game will be assessed on its own merit, whether it succeeds as a fighting simulation and, of course, its entertainment value. Comparisons will only be made where relevant.



The success of a fighting game relies on exerting physical action - something that Microleague Wrestling is completely devoid of.



Microleague Wrestling - WWF

A fighting game worth its salt should have both you and your opponent breaking out in a sweat as you wrench your joysticks in frustration. However, Microleague Wrestling, an official World Wrestling Federation game, claims to be: 'A new arena in fighting games'. With the help of 'real-life digitized visual action', the game is reputed to test your strategy skills rather than eye-to-hand coordination. The question is: have the WWF managed to improve on a formula which didn't need improving anyway? You can play against another competitor or a computer-controlled wrestler and you can choose to pit wrestling hero, Hulk Hogan, against such over-the-top characters as the modest Paul 'Mr Wonderful' Orndorf or Randy 'Macho Man' Savage - would you wrestle with a twenty stone lump called Randy Savage?

There is a brief interview with commentator 'Mean Gene' Ockerlund, in which the two wrestlers declare their dislike for each other and describe, in some detail, the pain they intend to inflict. Then 'Miss Lizzie' leads Randy Savage and Hulk into the ring as they prepare to serve up a slice of traditional American culture. The screen shows still, digitized shots of the wrestlers in the ring, then the

crowd, then pretty Miss Lizzie and then back to the ring again. Throughout the bout, 'Mean Gene' and a fellow commentator make useless comments which appear at the base of the screen. For example: 'Sure looks like Hulk's finished this time, Gene.' 'I wouldn't be so sure!' Each wrestler is capable of a number of holds and moves which are listed either side of the screen, and the game amounts to selecting a move with the mouse, clicking the button to implement a Suplex, Atom Drop, Head Smash or Clothes Line, and then sitting back and watching the action in still screen shots - pretty taxing stuff eh! A sign lights up to inform you whether the move has been successful.

The success of fighting games relies on physical involvement and this is something which Microleague Wrestling is completely devoid of. This is perhaps the most boring, superficial game I have ever played. It is more an ego trip for the oversized oafs than entertainment for the game player, and those digitized pictures are a complete failure. Avoid this game like one of Randy Savage's dirty leotards.

International Karate - System 3

There was only one serious contender for Fist's mastership and that was International Karate. This game wooed students away from the staid and monastic environment of temples and pagodas, to participate in karate competitions all around the world. The play worked perfectly and the game was a smash in the eight-bit market and, assured of continued success, it was duly converted onto the ST in 1986. The first thing that strikes you about this game is the spectacular backdrops which depict such locations as Sidney, Hawaii, London and Paris - the detail in these animated screens make the venue immediately recognizable.

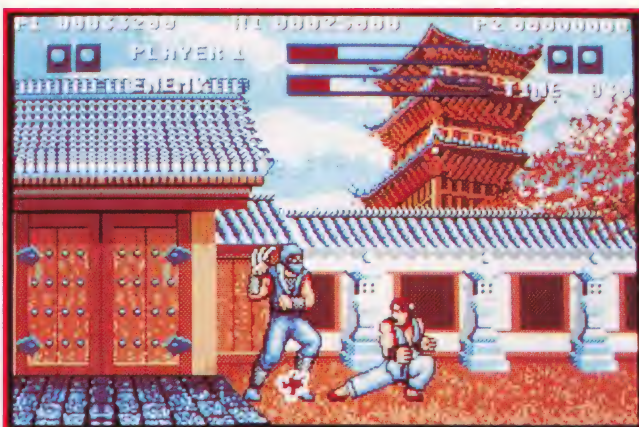
You have the choice of one or two-player participation and the aim is to progress through six grades to the ultimate black belt. If you are playing solo, the computer-controlled fighter becomes progressively more proficient as you progress through the grades. Two fighters stand in front of a famous landmark and prepare to do combat. Considering the age of the game, the characterizations are large and magnificent, and the fluidity of their

movement is astounding. The game makes full use of all sixteen possible joystick variations; you control the movement of your fighter with the joystick and pressing the firebutton makes him jump, somersault, high kick and 'Roundhouse'. In between bouts, you are invited to demonstrate your strength in a tile-breaking competition, while the speed of your reactions are tested to the limit in a star and spear-dodging contest.

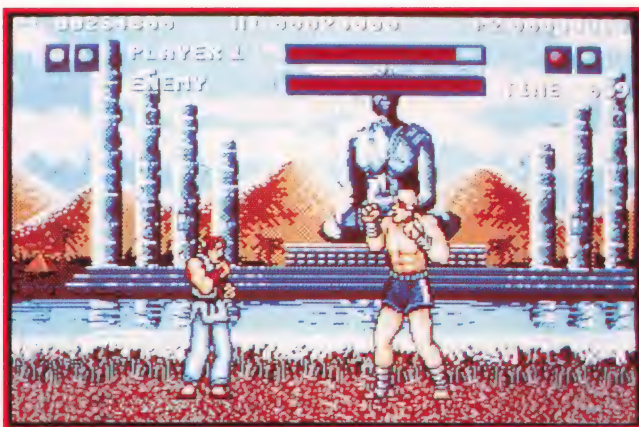
The international backdrops in this game are magnificent, but in comparison with its sequel, IK+, the controls are not as crisp and precise. However, two years ago, this was the sacrifice made for the smooth animation of the characters. Comparing an ageing original with its much improved sequel may be unfair, but in an STA megatest there are no concessions and each game is assessed on its own merit. However, with a tight-action microswitch joystick, International Karate still offers great entertainment.



The animated backdrops of famous landmarks compliment this ageing fighting game which still compares favourably against most recent releases



The Ninja may look mean armed with his claw, but he seems totally confused by Ryu's uncouth street fighting tactics.



Street Fighter - US Gold

Street fighting busted into the arcades and knocked the honourable martial arts games for six. This phenomenally successful beat'em-up kicked life back into fighting games, but the format changed considerably. Instead of the traditional martial arts games, which exercised honour and protocol, these were ruleless, crude and bloody brawls, which were collectively labelled 'street fighting games'.

The first fight takes place in the Orient against a couple of limp-wristed characters, and with sleeves rolled up and fists clenched, your man Ryu looks a bit out of place in front of a suitably oriental backcloth. Like a restaurateur faced with a rowdy customer, the Chinese man takes a pacificatory stance in this section of the game and just stands there while Ryu uses him as a punch bag. Pressing the firebutton and wrenching the joystick upwards and to the sides, sends Ryu's fists and feet flying into his victim's face. However, there is a noticeable delay between joystick movement and Ryu's reactions, which is fatal against tougher opponents later on in the game. You fight against each character twice before moving on to the next opponent, and there is a damage gauge for both men which monitors each hit. Armed with a claw and throwing stars a Ninja is a fearsome sight, but he only puts up a moderate fight. There is a tile-breaking competition between bouts and as a power gauge extends and retracts quickly, you must anticipate when it will be at its maximum extension and press the firebutton.

You travel to America to meet, Joe who is waiting in the railroad yard. Joe is a traditional street fighter, but he is slow and can be beaten with the minimum of effort. Next, a coloured boxer called Mike puts up a better fight and if you relax your guard, two or three punches could put Ryu out of the competition. Over in England, you face the fear-some punk, Birdie, and a nasty character called Eagle - no they're not golf enthusiasts! Birdie's speciality is the head butt, and one blow from that thick skull could give Ryu permanent brain damage. It is in these later levels that the delay between joystick movement and Ryu's reaction becomes more apparent.

This is a colourful and amusing game, but as a fighting simulation, it is lacking in many areas. In particular, the delay in reaction and sluggish controls are intolerable and the game seems to run in slow motion. Additionally, the skill and strength of the opposition does not increase as you progress - they are either weaklings which can be beaten in seconds or unstoppable giants.

Championship Wrestling - US Gold

You certainly can't complain about the variety of fighting games for the ST! Over the past four years, Epyx have made sports games their own and have striven to present enjoyable sports simulations. Championship Wrestling, however, should not be construed as a realistic simulation, and with characters like Prince Vicious and Purple Hayes, you can imagine that this game is rich in camp humour and lacking in realistic action. The first screen shows eight crazy wrestlers who are competing for the world wrestling championship and you can choose which character you want to control. You can play against the computer or up to eight players can participate in an elimination contest.

After selecting the characters, you can choose to practise the moves and holds or enter straight into the competition. The screen switches to the wrestling ring: 'I'll rip yer ears off and feed 'em to ya', shouts KC Colossus. 'Yo' old lady wassles better than you!' answers Purple Hayes in defiance. Without the firebutton pressed, the joystick can move the wrestler around the ring, whilst punches, holds and throws are achieved with the firebutton pressed. Incredibly, out of a possible eight joystick directions, Epyx claim that no less than 25 classic moves can be used, although during the bout you rarely achieve the hold or throw you intended.

If the main objective in this game was to lampoon the world of wrestling, then the creators have succeeded most admirably - the characterizations are hilarious! But surely the aim is to entertain as well as amuse the game player, which is something that this game fails to do. The fault lies in the controls, which often respond in complete defiance to your orders, and you end up waggling the joystick in the vain hope that you might achieve a throw or hold. This is the better of the two wrestling games available for the ST, but it is far from satisfactory.



With camp, colourful and larger than life characterization, Epyx successfully manage to lampoon the world of wrestling, but fail to present a realistic interpretation of the sport.



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Ninja Mission - Mastertronic

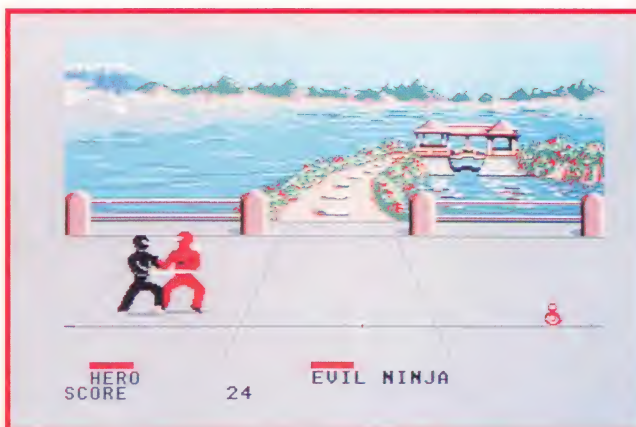
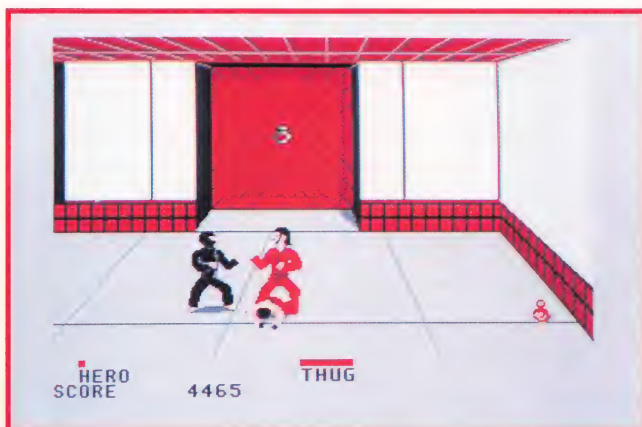
Mastertronic were determined that this game was going to pack a punch, and in their own words: 'Ninja would blow the black belts off all the others!' Two years on, how does that boast stand up in this megatest?

Your mission is to regain the obligatory idols which were stolen by the obligatory evil forces from the obligatory princess. Dressed in typical, sinister attire, your Ninja stands at the perimeter of the Palace of Death, awaiting your direction. With joystick control, you move the Ninja off the screen and the action is interrupted by the first of many screens which introduce the next section of the game. Ninja moves to 'The Walkway' where he is confronted by one guard. The animation is smooth as the two fighters set about each other, but the action is short-lived as one kick from Ninja leaves the pathetic guard lifeless on the ground. The guard drops a dagger and throwing star which can be picked up by moving near and pulling back on the joystick. Approaching the palace gate, another guard poses a minor problem and then you can collect the first idol, which replenishes your spent energy. Another screen follows, but there is no confrontation - the

guards are probably swapping knitting patterns back at the palace.

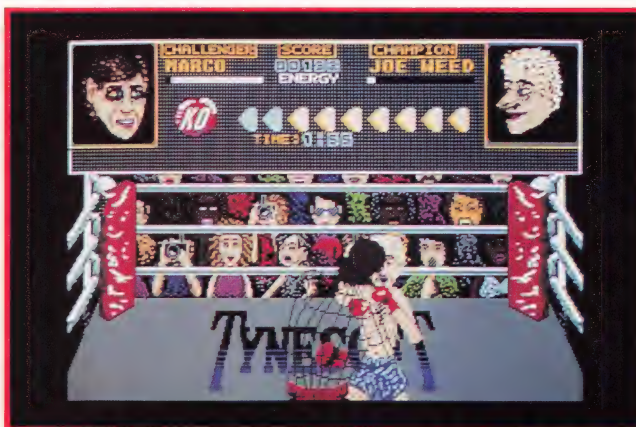
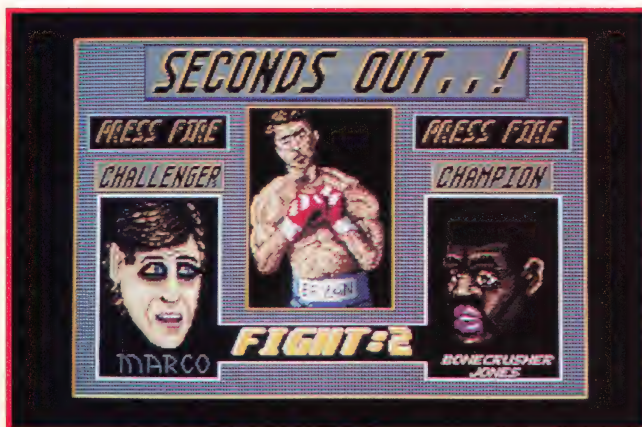
The fighting controls are similar to those of the majority of martial arts kick'em-ups, except that throwing the knives and stars is achieved by pressing the firebutton and wrenching the joystick in the opposite direction to the way Ninja is facing. Once you have beaten all the guards around the perimeter of the temple, you must find a trap door which leads into the main building. The guards around the perimeter couldn't fight their way out of a greasy takeaway bag and so the cowardly gang up on Ninja in an attempt to stop his idol collection.

Remember Mastertronic's boast that Ninja would blow the black belts off all the other martial arts games? Sadly, in comparison to the best examples which feature in this megatest, Ninja is a mere white belt, and not a very promising student at that. Cosmetically, Ninja was a worthy figurehead for Mastertronic's launch into the sixteen-bit market, but where this hopeless novice fails is in its game-play. Firstly, precise and responsive control over the fighter was sacrificed for the sake of smooth animation, and the level of difficulty was set so low that even the most apathetic of players could complete it in an hour.



Mastertronic sacrificed responsive control for smooth animation and so the controls are hit and miss.

Your wireframe boxer enables you to keep your eye on your opponent at all times.



Seconds Out - Tynesoft

We've had boxing with big Frank Bruno, Rocky and wee Barry McGuigan. But for me, these insights into the world of boxing have been long, drawn-out slugging matches, which have left me punch drunk. Described as 'a humorous game that 'packs a punch'', Tynesoft's Seconds Out is very much in the tradition of computer boxing. I have recently played its arcade counterpart and can report that this version is very similar. But when compared with the best martial arts simulations, does Seconds Out 'come up to scratch'?

You control Marco, the contender for the coveted world title, and you must defeat five boxers. The so-called humour in this game is provided by the competitors, who range from a very unlikely contender called Joe Weed, to a Russian with the inappropriate name of Mick 'Masher' Malone - obviously of Irish descent. The game screen shows the boxing ring with your first opponent, Joe Weed, shuffling around like an asthmatic geriatric. Your boxer has a wire frame body so that you can see your opponent at all times, and pressing the firebutton and pulling back on the joystick

makes Marco sway and dodge, as the opponent attempts to punch. Pushing the joystick forwards blocks the punches to the face and when the opponent drops his guard, releasing the firebutton and wrenching the joystick to the left or right sends Marco's fists flying in retaliation. Each boxer has an energy gauge, which depletes as they sustain hits, and when a 'KO' meter pulsates rapidly, pressing the firebutton and pushing the joystick forward unleashes Marco's winning knockout punch. As you progress towards the world title, each new opponent is stronger and possesses his own, individual winning punch. At the end of each round, Marco returns to his corner and control switches to the 'second', as he tends to the boxer's wounds.

There are certainly more punch-and-move variations in Seconds Out than any other boxing game I have played, but in the heat of the action, skill and tactics are soon forgotten and the game generates into a tiresome slugging match.

Barbarian - Palace

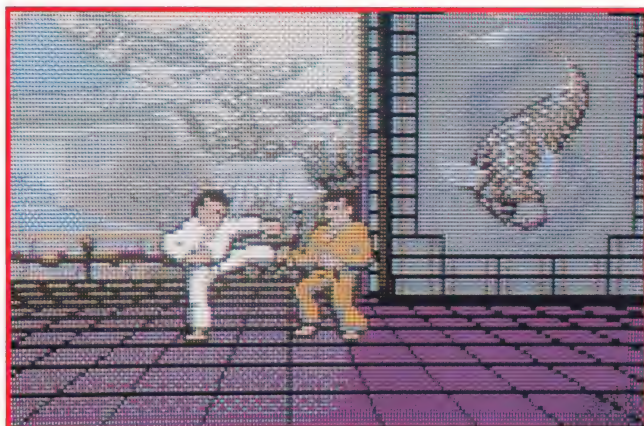
At first, I questioned whether a game in which two warriors hacked each other to death with broadswords had a legitimate place in this particular megatest. But if you took away the swords in Barbarian, the controls and game-play would make it a very typical example of this genre. Working on the premise that any publicity is good publicity, Barbarian's sales success was partly due to the ban which was imposed on the game by the German censorship body. Our European cousins expressed concern at the general gratuitous violence of the game and, specifically, the ability to decapitate a warrior for maximum points. But what really sealed the prohibition was the lizardman who lurches on screen after the gruesome spectacle, grabs the corpse and nonchalantly kicks the head into a thicket.

Two players can participate in the game or you can test your barbarism against the computer-controlled warrior. The two warriors meet in a forest clearing for the first encounter, and there are no concessions made for beginners. However, the joystick controls are similar to many unarmed combat games and there are sixteen variations of sword movement to attack and defend. The joystick moves the warrior and, pressing the firebutton and wrenching the joystick in various positions, wields the sword. The sounds of sword clashing against sword resounds from the forest clearing, and as the rough-edged iron tugs and tears at flesh, crimson gore spurts from the wound and the blow is registered on a hit indicator. Each barbarian can withstand twelve blows before his life's blood ebbs away, although decapitation ends the fight rather abruptly. As you progress, you travel from forest, to wasteland then back to forest and the energy lost in the previous level is not replenished for the ensuing fight.

Although I don't agree with the ban placed on Barbarian, I also abhorred Palace's decision to use the ban as a selling point in their advertising: 'Banned in Germany for being too violent' they boasted irresponsibly. Nevertheless, this is still one of my favourite two-player games. As mentioned, Barbarian was included in this megatest because without the swords, the game-play would be very typical of the genre.



Bloodthirsty it may be, but 'hack'n'slay' proves to be every bit as entertaining as the best fighting games - great two player participation!



Daniel, nearing the end of his quest, meets the dastardly chosen for the last time.



Karate Kid II - Microdeal

Daniel and his wise and venerable mentor were a winning combination in the movies and this game, which was released eighteen months ago on the ST, is a licence of the highly popular sequel. In Microdeal's one and only licenced game, Daniel must face a different opponent in each level, leading to a final conflict between the boy and his mortal enemy. The game begins in the relative safety of the temple and Daniel's first opponent is another student called Toshio. In the one-player mode, the computer controls the opponent, and the speed, strength and skill of each character increases as you progress.

Toshio is gifted with very basic skills and limited strength, which allows you to master the controls without getting knocked out of the game in the first round. Like so many games which were released in its wake, the controls for Karate Kid are based on the ones introduced in 'Fist', and so the game will be immediately recognizable to anyone who has played a fighting game before. The joystick controls Daniel's movement and the firebutton actions his moves, punches and kicks. The skill of the game is to avoid and block hits which deplete Daniel's strength and energy, and administer as many blows to your opponent as possible. Leaving Toshio to nurse his bruises, Daniel must now face the stronger Chosen in the temple gardens. If you manage to defeat Chosen you join Daniel's mentor, who has been trying to catch a fly with chopsticks while his protege is being kicked to death in the temple grounds. This extra level offers mild amusement as you move the old man's hand to catch the elusive insect.

Karate Kid II is not the best martial arts kickabout I have played, but it benefits from attractive backdrops and relatively smooth animation. However, the characters are small in comparison to International Karate's and the controls are unresponsive and undefined. Additionally, if two players participate in the game, one player must use the mouse which very quickly proves to be a massive disadvantage. Initially, the old man and the fly is mildly amusing, but it soon becomes a tedious interruption in game-play.

Manhattan Dealers combines fighting with adventure - with emphasis on the latter.



Manhattan Dealers - Silmarils

Manhattan Dealers is an example of a new type of game which combines fighting with adventure-style game-play. In this particular game, you control Inspector Harry and your task is to locate, recover and destroy drugs which are in the hands of Manhattan's many pushers. Each shipment of drugs contains harder stuff, beginning with caffeine and progressing to LSD. Your angry and ugly superior appears on screen, pounds his fat fist on the desk, and explains your mission. You must confront the pushers, fight and defeat them and confiscate their stash.

We meet Harry in a suburb of Manhattan. In front of him is a disused cellar and pushing the joystick to the left sets him off at a brisk pace towards the stairs. Suddenly, wielding a chain, a punk confronts Harry and tries to stop him from going down the cellar. Pressing the firebutton and wrenching the joystick upwards, plants a few well-placed kicks in the kid's face and the punk soon drops to his knees. Pulling back on the joystick makes Harry kneel down and search the kid for narcotics... he's clean - obviously an addict protecting his source. Down in the cellar, 'Inspector H' is welcomed by a biker with a chain-saw, and each slice of the blade obviously diminishes Harry's life force

- not to mention ruining a new pair of Levis! Those 'Eastwood-length' legs manage to keep the saw at a safe distance, and half a dozen kicks leaves the urban lumberjack reeling on the floor. Again, Harry checks the punk and discovers 5 'K' of narcotics.

Harry is in constant peril from crazed druggies and greedy pushers who take a dislike to his clean-up campaign. As they lunge at him with chains, bull whips, iron bars and baseball bats, residents in the tenement blocks throw bricks and plant pots at him from the windows. Having confiscated the narcotics, you must avoid the brick and pots and burn the stash in an oil drum. Once you have cleared the streets of caffeine, a shipment of harder stuff hits the streets.

Harry is limited to only eight fighting combinations, which amount to high and low kicks and punches. His movement in combat is staccato and rigid, like a wind-up tin soldier and so Manhattan Dealers should not be considered as a realistic fighting simulation. However, the combat is quite enjoyable, and combined with an absorbing adventure, thoughtful and atmospheric backdrops, this is a very respectable game.

International Karate Plus - System 3

Martial arts is the pursuit of excellence and the candidates in this megatest attain various grades; but only one game can claim to be a master - International Karate +. The original International Karate was a veritable smash in the eight-bit market four years ago and it was one of the first conversions on the ST. The game screen shows a magnificent animated backdrop, with fish jumping in the lake and leaves falling from the trees. First you can choose the colour of your fighter's tunic and the darkness of the character's shadows. The fighters are magnificent, massive figures and, uniquely, there are three characters on screen at once. If you are playing solo, the computer takes control of the other two and manipulates them with incredible intelligence and if two player participating, the computer controls the dormant fighter.

The joystick assumes control over a fighter and the controls are crisp, precise and responsive and there are seventeen moves and punches which are all clearly defined. But despite this precise and crisp control, the characters move with amazing fluidity. Every blow which connects with a part of a fighter's anatomy is accompanied by blood-curdling yelps of pain and the feet and fists of fury cut through

the air with a 'swish' and 'thwack'. Points are scored with every hit, but in true martial arts honour, they are halved if the victim is facing in the opposite direction. After each fight, the venerable master appears and gives his judgement on the fight. Between bouts, you are set feats of agility, speed and daring, such as deflecting bouncing balls and decapitated heads with a shield or kicking bombs off screen before they explode. As you progress through the game, you attain higher belt grades and the skill and strength of your opponents increases accordingly, and in latter levels, if you are playing solo, both computer-controlled fighters gang up on you. In addition to the terrific fighting action, there is humour in this game - features such as pressing the 'T' key releasing your opponent's belt and dropping his trousers.

When you enjoy the sheer excellence of International Karate + it is difficult to understand why so many other games fall short of the mark. Quite simply, this is the definitive arcade game, which has achieved the highest standard of presentation, game-play and control - International Karate + is a black belt, 10th dan game!

The characters may move with incredible fluidity, but the joystick controls are crisp, precise and responsive - the perfect combination!



Intolerable controls, a dated presentation and unenjoyable game-play makes this an unpromising novice of a fighting game.



Street Gang - Players

'Mickey's life was dull and boring', says the uninspiring but prophetic scenario, and so instead of putting his energies to the good of the community, he joins New York's toughest gang. But first the young scamp must prove he is worthy of such an honour and, with your help, he must roam the streets, beat people up and generally make a nuisance of himself.

The game screen shows that Mickey is already out on the streets and waiting for your guidance, so pushing the joystick to right sends our tearaway ambling across the screen. First, he is confronted by blonde-haired twins in matching-grey jogging suits. Faced with our trainee hooligan, the twins produce mugger spray and squirt it at him. As you try to protect Mickey from this completely provoked attack, the joystick controls let you down and no amount of wrenching and tugging will make our hapless hoodlum react any quicker than a three-toed sloth. But, fortunately, Mickey has incredible jumping powers and pushing the joystick upwards sends him sailing unrealistically over the twins.

When Mickey finally responds to your joystick wrenching, his

fighting powers are awesome and the poor recipient of the punch or kick explodes with astounding unrealism. As his smithereens settle on the sidewalk, Mickey's unfortunate victim sometimes drops whatever weapon he is carrying and, moving our anti-hero over the top of the object replenishes his strength and energy. Mickey can avoid the twins by climbing down the sewers. But the sewers are full of the city scum and Mickey's unlikely jumping powers are useless in the confines of the pipes and so he is better off fighting the twins on the streets.

Traditionally, every megatest has its turkey and this is issue 9's oven-ready fourteen-pounder. Quite frankly, Street Gang is one of the most hopeless games I have ever played. The graphics and characterizations are hackneyed; the joystick controls are appalling. If you want to avoid a life that is dull and boring like miserable Mickey's, then don't join his gang!

To sum up...

Game	House	Price	Difficulty	Pics	Sound	Overall
IK+	System 3	£19.95	Average	88%	70%	80%
Barbarian	Palace	£14.95	Average	74%	55%	67%
Int Karate	System 3	£19.95	Average	71%	50%	64%
Manhattan Deal	Silmarils	£19.95	Average	61%	45%	60%
Karate Kid	Microdeal	£19.95	Average	66%	50%	57%
Seconds Out	Tynesoft	£19.95	Average	53%	50%	55%
Street Fighter	US Gold	£19.95	Average	52%	45%	52%
Champ Wrestling	US Gold	£19.95	Average	51%	53%	52%
Ninja	Mastertronic	£9.95	Easy-Ave	49%	40%	50%
League Wrestling	WWF	£19.95	Average	35%	25%	32%
Street Gang	Players	£19.95	Average	28%	18%	24%

You may find that the scores in the above chart and the opinions in the reviews differ from the scores given to the games when they were originally reviewed in ST Action. This Megatest is based solely on the opinions of Jason Spiller and Steve Merrett and it reflects both the fact that they have formed opinions of the games over an extended period of time as well as the fact that the games are being compared against each other. These scores should be used as a comparative figure which indicates the merits of each game against each other.

If you have any comments about our Megatests, suggestions for additional information to be included, or ideas for future Megatests then please write to the usual address

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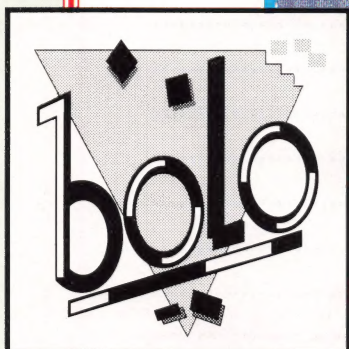
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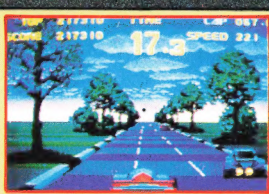
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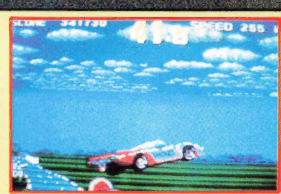
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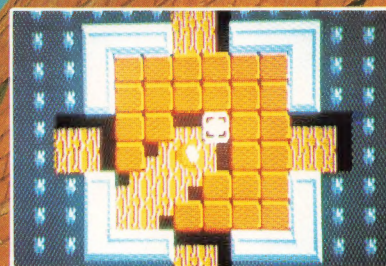
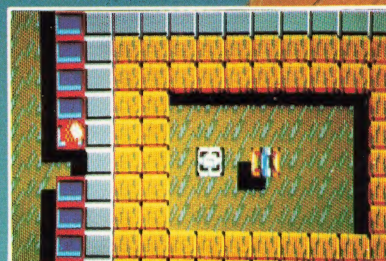
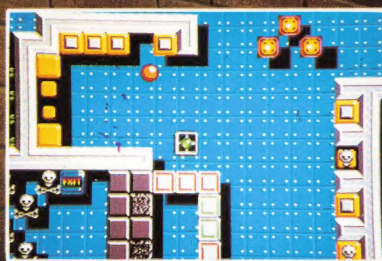
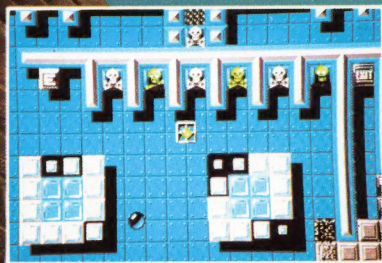
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